# The Dutch Revolt and Catholic Exile in Reformation Europe

## GEERT H. JANSSEN

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The Dutch revolt of the sixteenth century sparked one of the largest refugee crises of Reformation Europe. This book explores the flight, exile and eventual return of Catholic men and women during the war. By mapping the Catholic diaspora across northern Europe, Geert H. Janssen explains how exile worked as a catalyst of religious radical-isation and transformed the world views, networks and identities of the refugees. Like their Protestant counterparts, the displaced Catholic communities became the mobilising forces behind a militant International Catholicism. The Catholic exile experience thus facilitated the permanent separation of the northern and southern Netherlands. Drawing on diaries, letters and evidence from material culture, this book offers a penetrating picture of the lives of early modern refugees and their agency in the Counter-Reformation.

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For Arnoud

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# Preface

The idea to write a book about early modern exile first emerged when I emigrated from the Netherlands in 2005. In the following years, academic positions and visiting fellowships in the United Kingdom, Belgium and Germany enabled me to develop my ideas in stimulating international environments. In Cambridge in 2008/9 I was fortunate to teach a course on early modern refugees, which encouraged me to pursue a comparative approach to the topic. I eventually completed the book at Corpus Christi College, Oxford and I thank my colleagues there for their support. Living and working in different countries has been a real privilege, which has also made me more alert to the effects of migration and globalisation in our modern society. Hence, this book is about the experience of exile in a bygone age, but it is also informed by the thoughts and experiences of a travelling academic in the twenty-first century.

Parts of Chapters 2 and 4 were published previously in *Renaissance Quarterly* and *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*. I thank the University of Chicago Press and Cambridge University Press for their permission to use these texts in this book.

# Abbreviations

| | |
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| ARAB | Algemeen Rijksarchief, Brussels |
| ARSI | Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Rome |
| *BMGN* | *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* |
| *BN* | *Biographie Nationale* |
| CBL | Centrale Bibliotheek Leuven |
| *DWJ* | Wouter Jacobsz, *Dagboek van broeder Wouter Jacobsz*, I.H. van Eeghen (ed.), 2 vols (Groningen: Wolters, 1959–1960). |
| EAD | Erfgoed Archief Delft |
| HAK | Historisches Archiv Köln |
| NA | Nationaal Archief, The Hague |
| OKKN | Oud-Katholieke Kerk Nederland |
| RAG | Rijksarchief te Gent |
| RAL | Regionaal Archief Leiden |
| SAA | Stadsarchief Amsterdam |
| *SCJ* | *Sixteenth Century Journal* |
| *TvG* | *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* |
| UA | Utrechts Archief |
| UBA | Universiteitsbibliotheek Amsterdam |
| *Weinsberg* | Hermann Weinsberg, *Die autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Hermann Weinsbergs. Digitale Gesamtausgabe.* |

# Governors-general in the Low Countries, 1559–1609

1559–67: Margaret of Parma
1567–73: Don Ferdinand Alvarez de Toledo, duke of Alba
1572–73: Don Juan de la Cerda, duke of Medina Celi (designate)
1573–76: Don Luis de Requesens
1576–78: Don Juan of Austria
1578–92: Alexander Farnese, duke of Parma
1592–94 Peter Ernst of Mansfeld
1594–95: Ernest of Austria
1595: Pedro de Fuentes
1596–98: Albert of Austria
1598–1621/33: Albert of Austria & Isabella of Spain (sovereigns)

# Maps

Map 1  Map of the Habsburg Low Countries, 1566

**Map 2** Map of the Habsburg *reconquista* under Alexander Farnese

Map 3  Map of the Northern and Southern Netherlands, 1609

# Introduction

The St Nicolaikirche in the small German town of Kalkar owns a remarkable collection of sixteenth-century art. The church's holdings include a carved alabaster altarpiece [Fig. 1], an exquisitely painted epitaph [Fig. 2] and a gold-plated monstrance [Fig. 3].

None of these treasures were originally made for the local parish. Indeed, on close inspection the items show hallmarks of Amsterdam design.[1] Burial stones graced with distinctly Dutch names reinforce the alienating impression. Behind this confusion about space and purpose in Kalkar's parish church lies the tale of a little-known refugee enclave in Reformation Europe. During the later sixteenth century this remote town in Cleves served as a hub for displaced Catholics from the Low Countries. More specifically, Kalkar accommodated a group of distinguished Amsterdam families who had escaped their homes after the Protestant takeover of their city in 1578. Expelled and dispossessed, the émigrés recreated something of their lost Amsterdam world in their German safe haven. The surviving church treasures of the St Nicolaikirche are the tangible remnants of this Catholic exile experience.

The Amsterdam émigré community at Kalkar was part of a diaspora of thousands of Catholic men and women who moved across Europe during the so-called Dutch revolt. Often described as a struggle for national independence and Protestantism, the revolt in the sixteenth-century Netherlands was part of a series of civil wars that shook Reformation Europe. The Netherlandish variant was particularly complex because religious disputes were intertwined with discussions about Habsburg rule in the Low Countries as well as with local sensibilities. There were, in fact, several Dutch revolts. In this messy war, the Amsterdam expatriates belonged to the hard-line supporters of the established order. Firmly committed to the Church of Rome and aligned with the Habsburg government, they refused to accept rebel authority in the Netherlands

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[1] Cremer, 'Die Amsterdamer Monstranz'; De Werd, *St. Nicolaikirche*, 26–7, 130–8.

Figure 1  Private Altar of Sybrant Pompeiusz Occo and Lisbeth Jacobsdr Brouwer, *c*.1559. St Nicolaikirche, Kalkar.

and opposed religious freedoms to Protestants. These Catholic loyalists eventually preferred an uncertain future in exile to life under what they regarded as an illegitimate, heretical regime.

Like many losers in historical conflicts, the Catholic exiles have mostly been neglected by later generations of scholars, who have generally focused on the rebel party and the emergence of an independent Protestant state in the northern Netherlands. Today, few history books acknowledge that the birth of the Dutch Republic, which is now remembered for its economic progress and religious tolerance, also triggered an exodus of citizens who did not believe in its moral legitimacy or future. This book seeks to uncover the history of flight and exile of these opponents of the Dutch revolt.

### Exile and the Dutch revolt

By recapturing the Catholic exile experience, the present study engages with three larger debates in historical scholarship. First, it aims to offer a new narrative of the Dutch revolt by highlighting the agency of its various

Figure 2 Pieter Pietersz, Epitaph painting of the Bam family, *c*.1575. St Nicolaikirche, Kalkar.

refugees.[2] The military conflict in the sixteenth-century Low Countries was one of the largest civil wars of Reformation Europe, sparking an unprecedented refugee crisis. Between 1566 and 1590 more than 100,000 men and women were forced to leave their homes in the Netherlands.[3] Historians have been aware of these dramatic migrations, but they have paid limited attention to their composition and impact. In line with tendencies in international scholarship, a good deal of research

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[2] For the historiography of the revolt see Darby, *The Origins*; Pollmann, 'Internationalisering', 515–35.

[3] This (conservative) estimate includes Protestants and Catholics. Compare figures in Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 118–19; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 160, 219; Briels, *Zuid-Nederlanders*, 80; Janssens, 'Verjaagd uit Nederland', 102–19.

Figure 3  Monstrance, *c.*1543. St Nicolaikirche, Kalkar.

has been carried out on the experience of Protestants who escaped perse-
cution by the Habsburg regime in the Netherlands. This strand of scholar-
ship has been particularly interested in the development of Calvinist
exile communities in England and the Holy Roman Empire.[4] Few of
these works have recognised that flight and displacement eventually
affected the 'persecutors', too. As soon as the rebellion gained ground in
the Netherlands, there emerged a group of refugees who wanted to remain
loyal to the Habsburg monarchy and the Church of Rome. The following
chapters will map this parallel yet unexplored Catholic diaspora across

[4] Examples include Backhouse, *The Flemish*; Dünnwald, *Konfessionsstreit*; Esser,
*Niederländische Exulanten*; Grell, *Brethren in Christ*; Pettegree, *Emden*; Schilling,
*Niederländische Exulanten*; Spicer, *The French-speaking*; Spohnholz, *The Tactics*.

sixteenth-century Europe; from Amsterdam, Antwerp and Douai to Cologne, Paris and Rome.

Redressing the imbalance enables us to reconsider the remarkable outcome of the war: the split of the Low Countries into two distinct states. It is a commonplace that the Dutch revolt, unintentionally, led to the creation of a predominantly Protestant Dutch Republic in the north and a Habsburg Catholic monarchy in the south [Map 3]. This division, which has largely held up through the present, is so familiar that historians have often taken it for granted. Whereas the causes of the Netherlandish wars have been fiercely debated, their dramatic results have provoked far less controversy. Some historians have argued that the separation between north and south in fact predated the war. The Dutch revolt merely reaffirmed the existing dominance of the province of Holland in the northern areas and cemented the influence of Flanders and Brabant in southern territories.[5] Others have pointed to military factors to explain the lasting frontier. According to this line of thought, the river delta and wetlands in the north prevented royal armies from recapturing the rebellious towns of Holland and Zeeland. Priorities of the Habsburg monarchy elsewhere in Europe further contributed to the unexpected resilience of the rebellion in the northern provinces.[6]

These different interpretations have left some problems unaddressed. For example, they do not really explain the growing cultural divide between north and south over the course of the conflict. Nor do they clarify the shifting popular support for the revolt in both areas. The eventual perseverance of the rebellion in the northern provinces is surprising considering that the heartland of the Protestant movement had initially been in southern areas. Antwerp and Ghent, rather than Amsterdam and Groningen, had served as the seedbeds of Calvinist militancy during the early phases of the troubles.[7] An analysis of the forces of migration may help to provide some new explanations for this paradoxical development. This study will show how refugees on both sides of the conflict played a formative role in the construction and exploitation of opposing confessional identities. As the war forced Protestant and Catholic refugees to move to northern and southern strongholds, these exiles were able to shape contrasting collective self-images in the Dutch Republic and the Southern Netherlands. There was nothing inevitable

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[5] Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, v–vi, 16–29; Tracy, *The Founding*, 1–8. Compare Stein and Pollmann, *Networks*; Woltjer, *Op weg*, 20–5, 44–50, 211–23.
[6] Geyl, *The Revolt*; Parker, *The Army of Flanders*. More recent Groen, *De tachtigjarige oorlog*. Compare Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 11–15.
[7] Marnef, *Antwerp*; Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 64–88, 131–45.

about the emergence of a Protestant state in the northern Netherlands or the resurgence of Catholic loyalism in the south. This book contends that unforeseen movements of religiously committed refugees effectively sealed the cultural cleavage of the two Netherlands at the end of the sixteenth century.

### Exile and the Counter-Reformation

A focus on the radicalising effects of exile also furthers our understanding of the Counter-Reformation in northern Europe, which is the second aim of this book. Scholars have long noted how Catholicism experienced an unexpected revival in the Southern Netherlands after *c*.1585.[8] By 1600, places such as Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels had become bastions of Tridentine renewal. The causes of this religious metamorphosis have long divided historians. Some have asserted that the rejuvenation of Catholic religiosity was enforced by top-down ecclesiastical reform and Habsburg sponsorship.[9] This popular reading of the Counter-Reformation resonates with conclusions in international historiography. The post-Reformation Catholic Church has long been viewed as a repressive, elitist institution that effectively imposed confessional discipline and doctrinal uniformity. But in recent decades this image has been challenged. An increased focus on the religious world of the laity has made scholars more aware of the variety of Catholic cultures that coexisted in early modern Europe and of the limits of state–church cooperation. Some have seen the rise of confessionalised Catholicism as the outcome of popular initiatives on the ground or have noted that a revival of Catholic spirituality in fact predated the implementation of the decrees of the Council of Trent.[10]

Such observations are also pertinent for a re-evaluation of Catholic renewal in the Low Countries. Recent scholarship has suggested that the progress of a popular Counter-Reformation movement in the Dutch revolt was grounded in the traumatic experience of rebel violence and Protestant militancy.[11] Calvinist radicalism in places such

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[8] Recently re-assessed in Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*.
[9] Tracy, 'With and without', 547–75; Cloet, 'De gevolgen', 53–78; Marinus, *De contra-reformatie*, esp. 39; Thijs, *Van geuzenstad*, 33–60.
[10] For this historiography see De Boer, 'An Uneasy Reunion', 366–87; Ditchfield, 'Of Dancing Cardinals', 386–408; Forster, 'With and without', 315–43; Forster, *Catholic Revival*, 1–17; Johnson, *Magistrates*, 1–13; Laven, 'Encountering', 706–20; Louthan, *Converting Bohemia*, 1–15, 317–24; Reinhard and Schilling, *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung*.
[11] De Schepper, 'De mentale rekonversie', 420–8; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 89–113; Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 146–67; Weis, *Des villes en révolte*.

as Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp and Brussels bred a self-conscious Catholic counter-culture in the early 1580s. Judith Pollmann has shown that this resentment was particularly fervent among Catholic loyalists who escaped the rebel towns and moved to Cologne, Douai or Liège. Pollmann suggested therefore that a militant Catholic party first took shape in the émigré communities of the 1570s and 1580s.[12] Yet it is still unclear how exactly this link between exile and the rise of Counter-Reformation zeal should be understood, since Catholic refugees have never been properly studied. A decade ago Henk van Nierop analysed the living conditions of émigrés in royalist Amsterdam, but a more comprehensive picture of the Catholic exile experience is lacking.[13]

The present study seeks to probe the formative impact of exile on changing Catholic identities, both in the northern and in the southern Netherlands. More specifically, it will argue that many displaced Catholics became receptive to militant strands of Catholicism during their years in foreign safe havens. Local media, clerical leadership and forms of sociability facilitated and shaped this process of religious radicalisation among Catholic refugees. When the changing course of the war allowed the exiles to return home, these spiritually reborn men and women promulgated their radical beliefs in areas recovered by the Habsburg monarchy. To assess the long-term consequences of the exile experience also serves to highlight the international origins of Catholic renewal in the Low Countries. Forced migrations across northern Europe made the Counter-Reformation project a truly transnational enterprise.

### Exile and migration scholarship

This book proceeds from a cross-confessional perspective on exile. Hence its third objective is to build bridges between different strands of migration scholarship. More specifically, this comparative approach aims to link the experiences of Catholic refugees in the Dutch revolt to those of their Protestant counterparts, to assess international collaborations between Catholic émigrés in communal asylum hubs, and to place the study of Catholic exile within the context of forced migrations of religious minorities elsewhere in early modern Europe.

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[12] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 131–42.
[13] Now available in English translation: Van Nierop, *Treason*. References to Catholic exiles can also be found in Donnet, *Les exilés*; Fasel, 'De Leidse glippers'; Hoogland, 'De Friesche vlugtelingen'; Noordeloos, 'Fugitieve personen'; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*; Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen'.

The noted dominance of Protestant exile in current historiography has not only created a misleading picture of the refugee crisis in the sixteenth-century Low Countries, it also fails to appreciate the dialectical links that existed between opposing religious groups. As we will see, Protestant and Catholic refugee movements in fact run parallel during the war in the Netherlands. Whereas evangelical dissenters escaped persecution by Habsburg authorities, committed Catholics fled when Protestant rebels and returning refugees took power. Those who had been persecuted thus turned into persecutors and vice versa. Such interconnections are relevant because they invite us to reconsider the roles of victims and oppressors in this early modern conflict, and to explore their common concerns and strategies. It will become clear that exile served as a catalyst for religious radicalisation in both refugee communities. A comparative approach also elucidates how Catholic and Calvinist exile cultures in fact bred each other.

Catholic émigrés did not constitute an isolated, inward-looking community. In asylum towns they continuously interacted with their host environment. In places such as Douai and St Omer, Netherlandish refugees exchanged ideas with Catholic émigrés from the British Isles, notably England, and expanded their social networks. The dynamics of this 'International Catholicism', comparable to the better-known phenomenon of 'International Calvinism', has not been sufficiently studied. In British historiography, Catholic exiles have mainly been viewed through the lens of a national religious culture.[14] The present study considers asylum towns as transnational spaces that fostered a new, internationally informed Catholic mentality.

Drawing such connections finally serves to engage with existing scholarship on Protestant refugees and Jewish diasporas elsewhere in Europe. So far, migration scholarship of the early modern period has been limited by national and confessional angles.[15] Yet the forces that created these different refugee communities were surprisingly similar. It is a commonplace that the Reformation period witnessed a European-wide refugee crisis, which affected all religious denominations, including Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims.[16] If Catholic exiles in the Dutch revolt were thus part of a larger, international phenomenon, the

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[14] Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*; Guilday, *The English Catholic Refugees*; Loomie, *The Spanish Elizabethans*; Marshall, 'Religious Exiles'; Walker, *Gender and Politics*.

[15] Bade et al*., Enzyklopädie Migration*; Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, 92–107; Moch, *Moving Europeans*, 22–31; De Munck and Winter, 'Regulating Migration', 1–22; Norwood, *Strangers and Exiles*.

[16] Braun, 'Katholische'; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*; Terpstra, 'Imagined Communities', 222–5.

possible parallels between different groups of religious refugees deserve more attention. Recently, a number of historians have started to compare Catholic, Protestant and Jewish exile narratives, identifying common responses to displacement that had long been regarded as 'typically Calvinist' or 'distinctly Jewish'.[17] This study builds on this comprehensive approach, enabling readers to draw cross-confessional comparisons.

### Approach

This study does not pretend to offer an exhaustive overview of all Catholic migrations during the Dutch revolt. Rather, it seeks to illuminate the formative impact of exile on Counter-Reformation culture and on the history of the Low Countries. As much as possible it will call upon the voices of the refugees themselves. Migration scholarship of the early modern period has traditionally been grounded in quantitative analyses of networks, living conditions and labour markets. For all its virtues, this approach has perhaps less value for the study of refugees who were not systematically registered and for whom we are left with patchy data. What is more, statistically focused studies of migration tell us little about shifting perceptions, changing identities and cultural interactions within émigré communities. This book seeks to capture the experience of exile for sixteenth-century individuals. As we will see, the lives and world views of all Catholic refugees were deeply affected by the years of flight and displacement, but each responded to these challenges in distinct ways. While most sources in this book relate to the middle and upper strata of Netherlandish society, we aim to do justice to the variety of Catholic cultures in which exiles participated. In any case, Catholic refugees were not mere passive victims of a gruesome religious conflict, but agents of change who made a profound impact on their societies.

To trace how exile transformed the refugees' identities and subsequently influenced those of others, this study pursues a chronological approach. The first Part, 'Flight', sketches the origins of the Dutch revolt in the 1560s (Chapter 1) and shows how the outbreak of war triggered a Catholic exodus during the 1570s and 1580s (Chapter 2). The following Part, 'Exile', maps the living conditions in various asylum hubs (Chapter 3), explains how local facilities encouraged refugees to transform their religiosity (Chapter 4) and considers how international collaborations influenced the refugees' shifting world views (Chapter 5). The last Part, 'Return', assesses the remigration of exiles to the Low

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[17] Greengrass, 'Two Sixteenth-Century', 317–37; Schilling, 'Christliche und jüdische', 407–44; Schunka, 'Konfession', 28–63.

Countries in the 1580s and 1590s and compares their lasting agency in the Southern Netherlands (Chapter 6) and the Dutch Republic (Chapter 7).

### Terminology

A few words on the use of terminology may be helpful. In the sixteenth century the words 'exile' [*balling*], 'refugee' [*vluchteling*] and 'fugitive' [*voortvluchtige*] could have different semantic meanings, but they were often used interchangeably. The condition of exile sometimes referred to a formal banishment, yet distinctions between forced and voluntary migration were generally blurred in the Dutch revolt. Labelling refugees in clear-cut categories is therefore misleading and obscures our understanding of the thoughts and anxieties of those involved. The present study will follow the historical flexibility of terminology, in order to show how refugees described themselves and how the outside world expressed their position in society.

Geographical vocabulary calls for pragmatism. Changing borders and linguistic preferences in this part of Europe can be confusing. In this book, the terms 'Low Countries' and 'the Netherlands' will be used as synonyms, thus referring to the entire Habsburg polity, which at the time encompassed the present-day Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg and parts of northern France [Map 1]. The adjective 'Dutch' will be used more sparingly; that is, only in the context of the newborn Dutch Republic in the north. For pragmatic reasons the expression 'Dutch revolt' will be followed throughout, also with reference to the rebellion in the southern provinces. Regarding the use of place names we will follow common practice in English, which is not always consistent. Notably, the towns of Louvain and Courtrai are here referred to as Leuven and Kortrijk, but Antwerp, Bruges, Brussels, Ghent, The Hague and Ypres have been anglicised. Finally, it has long been customary to label the Habsburg government and its armies in the Netherlands as 'Spanish'. The use of this adjective is partly the outcome of successful rebel propaganda that sought to discredit the royal party by portraying it as an alien, 'Hispanic' force. To allow a more neutral reading of the revolt, we prefer to use the term Habsburg rather than Spanish.

*Part 1*

# Flight

# 1    *Corpus christianum* divided

### *The Calling of St Anthony*

What was Catholic life about on the eve of the Dutch revolt? The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam probed this question in its 1986 exhibition *Art before the Iconoclasm*. It brought together a large collection of paintings, sculptures, furniture and textiles produced in the northern Netherlands in the decades prior to the outbreak of war. These early sixteenth-century works opened up a religious world that was unfamiliar to many of the exhibition's visitors. One of the principal objects was *The Calling of St Anthony*, commonly attributed to Aertgen Claesz van Leyden [Fig. 4].[1]

Dated to around 1530, the painting shows a priest preaching inside a vaulted church interior. Behind the pulpit is a picture of Moses with the Ten Commandments. Among the listeners on the right we see St Anthony, depicted in fashionable sixteenth-century attire. Inspired by the sermon's message, he decides to share his wealth with the poor; in the upper right corner of the painting we see him, spiritually reborn, handing out bread. The sermon also strikes a chord with the other men and women in the church. In front of the pulpit a man looks up to heaven and appears to be in a trance. A woman folds her arms while others are engaged in intense prayer.

The iconography of *The Calling of St Anthony* is conventional and innovative at the same time. By creating a seamless transition between the church interior and the outside world, the artist presents the church as being part of public space. Its moral values naturally extend beyond its walls. The shared prayer session of men and women further emphasises the communal nature of religious experience at the time. *The Calling of St Anthony* encourages us to understand the pre-revolt Catholic Church as a single body of Christian believers. The theme of the painting also reminds modern viewers that religious life in the early sixteenth century

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[1] Filedt Kok, Halsema-Kubes and Kloek, *Kunst voor de beeldenstorm*, 161–2; Kloek, Halsema-Kubes and Baarsen, *Art before the Iconoclasm*, 20–3.

Figure 4 Aertgen Claesz van Leyden, *The Calling of St Anthony*, 1530s. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

stood squarely in the tradition of late medieval lay spirituality. In calling for piety and charity, the work is close in spirit to the popular, engaging religious movements that had flourished since the fifteenth century. Yet on close inspection, *The Calling of St Anthony* is also sensitive to new

developments in artistic style and religious taste. Consider, for example, the classical architecture of the church interior. Replete with Renaissance ornaments and medals of ancient heroes, the work is comfortably situated within the cosmopolitan culture of Renaissance humanism.

Aertgen Claesz van Leyden was reportedly the son of a fuller in Leiden's cloth-making industry. As far as we know, he never visited Italy, nor had he received a classical education.[2] If he indeed painted *The Calling of St Anthony*, he had probably become familiar with Renaissance ideals through prints, drawings or books. We know that the densely populated Low Countries, particularly the commercial metropolis of Antwerp, maintained strong trading connections to the Mediterranean world. Some of Aertgen's designs are also reminiscent of the work of Lucas van Leyden, the famous painter-printmaker who lived in the same town. Aertgen's artistic sophistication and international orientation are finally evident from the painstaking depictions of exotic textiles and imported fur, including the dress of an oriental-looking man or 'Turk' in the forefront of the panel. The fruits, insects and flowers on the floor were conspicuous markers of the artist's skills as well as his emblematic understanding of nature. A little fly, visible on the white cap of a woman, symbolises the transient nature of all earthly goods and pursuits, but also encapsulates the hyperrealism for which painters of the Low Countries were famous.[3] In this blending of humanist taste and Christian engagement, *The Calling of St Anthony* offers a window onto the profound, yet shifting, religiosity in the Netherlands on the eve of the Dutch revolt.

In recapturing this vibrant religious culture, *Art before the Iconoclasm* also prompted new questions. If popular piety blossomed in the sixteenth-century Netherlands, how can we explain the sudden outbreak of violence and iconoclasm in 1566? The organisers of the exhibition provided only some implicit answers to this problem. They assumed that the iconoclastic 'catastrophe' had been the work of a radical Protestant minority. 'As soon as the unrest had died away, people set about repairing the damage … Then they pressed on with what had been started before 1566.'[4] Yet the exhibition did not pay much attention to the ways that people had actually perceived, or responded to, the widespread destruction of religious art during the Dutch revolt. Some other presuppositions remained unquestioned, too. The exhibition's focus on *northern* Netherlandish art, for

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[2] Van Mander, *Het Schilder-boeck*, fo. 236v–238r.
[3] See the discussion in Filedt Kok, Halsema-Kubes and Kloek, *Kunst voor de beeldenstorm*, 161–2.
[4] Kloek, Halsema-Kubes and Baarsen, *Art before the Iconoclasm*, 128–9. Compare Freedberg, 'Art and Iconoclasm', 69–80; Jonckheere, *Antwerp Art*, 7–27.

example, proceeded from a cultural north–south divide that few women and men in the pre-revolt Low Countries would have recognised.[5] In any case, the decorative language used by Aertgen Claesz van Leyden seems to stem more from Antwerpian and Flemish sources than from those of Friesland or Groningen. The very title *Art before the Iconoclasm* likewise encouraged visitors to view the rich material culture of the Netherlands through the lens of a looming 'catastrophe'.

Historians may have different views about the state of Catholicism in the mid-sixteenth century, but most of them agree that the eruption of violence in 1566 was an astonishing and often perplexing event for those who lived through it.[6] As we will see, tensions in the Low Countries had been long simmering, but there was nothing inevitable about the collapse of the Catholic Church order or the progress of a Calvinist-inspired Reformation, let alone the eventual split of the Low Countries into northern and southern states. To appreciate the origins of the Dutch revolt and its unexpected outcomes, we need to consider the crisis in the sixteenth-century Netherlands on its own terms.

### The Habsburg body politic

Contemporaries often struggled to gauge the true causes of the troubles in the Low Countries. An intriguing attempt was made around 1568 by Willem van der Lindt, better known under his latinised surname Lindanus. A leading cleric and future bishop, Lindanus composed a manuscript entitled *Persecutio Goessaica in Belgio* [*About the Persecution of 'Geux' in the Netherlands*], which framed recent events in the Netherlands as a classic 'tragedy'.[7] Interestingly, Lindanus' interpretation of the revolt's origins was informed by his own recent experience of exile. During the outbreak of violence and iconoclasm in 1566 the cleric had hastily escaped his home in The Hague and found shelter with relatives in nearby Dordrecht. His flight, and what he saw as God's protection during his tumultuous journey to safety, made a deep impression.[8] It bolstered Lindanus' views about the intrinsic evils of Protestantism and added a

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[5] This is subject to debate. Compare Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, v–vi, 16–29; Stein and Pollmann, *Networks*; Tracy, *The Founding*, 1–8; Woltjer, *Op weg*, 20–5, 44–50, 211–23.

[6] See assessments in Arnade, *Beggars*; Duke, *Dissident Identities*; Van Nierop, *Treason*; Marnef, *Antwerp*; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*.

[7] 'Tragoediae'. CBL, Persecutio Goessaica, fo. 2r. I am grateful to Violet Soen for providing me with a copy of the text. A discussion of its content is offered in Soen, *Geen pardon*, 25, 77–100. For Lindanus see Van Beuningen, *Wilhelmus Lindanus*; Rogier, *Geschiedenis*, II, 284–96; Woltjer, *Friesland*.

[8] Van Beuningen, *Wilhelmus Lindanus*, 192–4. For the events in The Hague in 1566 see Duke, *Reformation*, 129–40; Scheerder, *De Beeldenstorm*, 76–8; Smit, *Den Haag*, 44–60.

sense of militancy to his religious convictions. The *Persecutio Goessaica* is one of the first examples of the radicalising impact of flight on Catholic mentalities in the conflict.

For all its uncompromising rhetoric, Lindanus' narrative echoed some commonly held ideas. The cleric reasoned, for example, that the troubles in the Netherlands had been the outcome of religious disunity and the reluctance of the authorities to suppress heterodoxy more rigorously. In this way, the virus of Protestant heresy had fatally infected the *corpus christianum*, the body of the entire Netherlandish community. In the sixteenth century, society was often conceived as a sacred and communal *corpus*. This analogy expressed the ideal of a unified Christian community of naturally overlapping religious, social and political corporations. The metaphor of the body was also used to justify political hierarchies. If the ruler of a state formed the natural head of a body politic, then local communities constituted its various corporal parts. It followed that the metaphorical body, like the physical body, could become ill or infected.[9] Religious divisions in particular were believed to contaminate the body social. Heterodoxy affected the well-being of the entire community and posed a threat to the salvation of all its members. For Catholics this bodily symbolism was closely connected to the miracle of the Eucharist, and specifically the doctrine of transubstantiation. The latter contends that when the sacrament of holy communion is administered during Mass, the bread and wine of the ritual are transformed into the body and blood of Christ. By contesting the doctrine of transubstantiation, Protestant reformers did not only reject a key element of contemporary Catholic theology, but they also challenged traditional readings of the societal *corpus christianum*.[10] Although the underlying corporal metaphors left much room for interpretation, they provided a powerful interpretative framework through which contemporaries, such as Lindanus, understood the events in their lives.

What, exactly, caused the divisions within the Netherlandish body social? Scholars generally agree that the Dutch revolt originated in disputes about political and religious freedoms. We should read these 'freedoms' in sixteenth-century terms, hence as 'privileges' or liberties.[11] In 1555, Philip II of Habsburg had inherited the amalgam of Netherlandish counties or provinces from his father, Charles V. The area roughly

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[9] Compare Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe*, 253–81, esp. 254; Brown, *Civic Ceremony*, 100–66; Davis, 'The Sacred'; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 50–71; Terpstra, 'Lay Spirituality', 269–78.

[10] Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 288–346; Wandel, *The Eucharist*.

[11] The best general overview of the revolt's origins remains Van Nierop, 'Alva's Throne', 29–47. A recent reassessment is Pollmann, 'Internationalisering'.

stretched from Groningen to Luxemburg and from Artois to Gelderland [Map 1]. Strategically located between France, England and the German states, these Low Countries constituted a key possession of the Burgundian-Habsburg dynasty. In particular the western provinces of Flanders, Brabant, Zeeland and Holland were highly urbanised and contributed more than eighty per cent of the central government's tax revenues. Opinions differed as to how this eclectic body politic should be governed. Like his father, Philip II aimed to integrate the loose union of duchies, counties and lordships into a more federal Netherlandish state. For this goal the Habsburg monarch needed support from local representative bodies, even though Philip II believed his princely authority came directly from God.[12] Philip's subjects in the Low Countries did not deny the sacral dimension of Habsburg rule, but many tended to view the Netherlandish composite state as a collection of largely autonomous parts. Urban elites and nobles regarded attempts towards unification as threats to their liberties. Others, including members of leading aristocratic families and university-trained officials, were more sympathetic to the reformist agenda because they profited from the growing patronage resources of the Habsburg enterprise.

Historians have pointed out that the gradual integration of the Low Countries was not merely the outcome of dynastic ambition and top-down Habsburg design. The idea of a Netherlandish body social was also advanced through a common devotional culture, public ritual and interregional festivals. Habsburg 'propaganda' thus engaged with sensibilities on the ground and consciously incorporated local urban traditions.[13] In addition to these exercises in community building, the Habsburg unification project grew in size and prestige because of specific demand 'from below'. The Great Council at Mechelen, for example, had been installed by Philip II's predecessors as a national judicial court. It primarily catered to towns, urban corporations and individual citizens who appreciated an increase in legislative security.[14] Paradoxically, the centralisation of the Habsburg body politic also expanded the powers of these individual entities. In return for the implementation of new fiscal measures the central government frequently bestowed privileges upon its taxpaying citizens, towns and provinces. Growing financial demands of the Habsburg monarchy in the sixteenth century thus fostered a political consciousness in urban

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[12] Kamen, *Philip of Spain*, 233; Parker, *The Grand Strategy*, 77–110.

[13] Van Bruaene, 'The Habsburg Theatre State', 131–49; Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 14–47. For the use of the term propaganda see Bloemendal and Van Dixhoorn, 'Early Modern', 282–84; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 25–6.

[14] Van Nierop, 'Alva's Throne', 34–5.

corporations. Experience with local government and tax regulation would later serve the rebels well.[15]

The tensions that resulted from these contradictory processes of unification and decentralisation grew more complicated because Philip II had other priorities to attend to. The reach of his dynastic empire included territories in Spain, Italy and the Americas. The presence of Ottoman forces in the Mediterranean was arguably Philip's main concern. Born and raised in Castile, he also preferred to govern his Netherlandish dominions from Madrid. Despite numerous travel plans, Philip II never visited the Low Countries after 1559. Slow communications proved a serious weakness for the Habsburg cause during the emerging crisis in the Netherlands. In a society in which the prince represented the head of the body social, his physical absence was also felt as a sign of social neglect. Philip II's limited linguistic range as ruler of a polyglot empire reinforced this sense of geographical detachment and psychological alienation from the wellspring of government. Equipped with some basic French but no Dutch, the king tended to use Castilian as his working language.[16] All these factors added to the impression of a gradual 'hispanisation' of royal rule in the Netherlands.

Disputes about political autonomy and princely authority were not fundamentally new. Nor were they unique to the composite state of the Low Countries. Elsewhere in sixteenth-century Europe, fiscal reform and constitutional centralisation provoked similar tensions. Even the outbreak of open violence as a result was not exceptional. The towns of Flanders, for example, boasted a rich tradition of rebellion against their Burgundian and Habsburg rulers. Other provinces had frequently collided with Philip II's predecessors, too.[17] During the revolt of the 1570s, the royal governor in Brussels noted with dismay how he had read 'in the history books . . . that there have been thirty-five revolts against the natural prince, and after each of them the people remained far more insolent than before'.[18] Previous Burgundian and Habsburg rulers had responded to these uprisings by a combination of force and compromise. The former was the preferred means to suppress dissent and enforce obedience. The latter strategy aimed to restore each side's confidence in the other and to reaffirm the contract between ruler and subject, or between the head and the subordinate limbs of the body social.[19]

[15] Koopmans, *De Staten van Holland*, 47–86; Tracy, *Holland*; Tracy, *The Founding*, 37–73.
[16] Kamen, *Philip of Spain*, 220–1; Parker, *The Grand Strategy*, 13–45; Soen, *Vredehandel*, 80–1.
[17] Marnef, 'The Netherlands', 344. See further Boone, 'The Dutch Revolt'; Boone and Prak, 'Rulers, Patricians', 99–117; Dumolyn and Haemers, 'Patterns'.
[18] The quote is from Don Luis de Requesens, cited in Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 34.
[19] Arnade, *Beggars*, 12–89; Soen, *Vredehandel*, 27–33.

## Religious divisions

The Dutch revolt thus built on a tradition of violent opposition and reconciliation strategies. But as Lindanus' analysis indicated, religious divisions made the crisis of the 1560s fundamentally different from previous rebellions. Reformist ideals had found a fertile soil in the Netherlands from the start. Highly urbanised, dependent on international trade, and having a relatively literate population, the Low Countries possessed all the prerequisites for a grassroots reformation. It is telling that Luther's texts were on sale in Antwerp within a year of his proclamation at Wittenberg in 1517. In the next two decades some eighty editions of Luther's writings were printed in Dutch alone.[20] The popularity of these and other evangelical ideas stemmed from the devotional lay movement within the existing church. The growth of educational facilities and the arrival of the printing press in the fifteenth century had furthered this so-called spiritual emancipation of the laity. We know, for instance, that bible-reading in the vernacular had become a common activity among the Netherlandish urban classes. In numerous literate societies or 'chambers of rhetoric', citizens trained themselves in devotional poetry and religious debate. In such an environment, the dividing lines were blurred between popular Christian humanism, exemplified by the ideas of Erasmus of Rotterdam, and the reformist ideals of Luther and even Calvin.[21] Evangelical Protestantism came in many guises, encompassing separatist-minded anabaptists, non-confessional spiritualists and local bible-reading groups. While the majority of 'protestantising Catholics' preferred to practise their faith within the official Church, shifting religious preferences did undermine the Church's prestige. There is evidence that from the 1520s gifts to religious institutions declined, attendance at processions diminished and the number of monastic vows dropped. The churchwardens of St George's in Antwerp noted in 1523 a recent decrease in donations, 'since the disturbances and opinions of Lutherus have reigned'.[22]

Because the expression of faith was an intrinsically public affair, changing religious practices affected the cohesion of local communities. The belief in a *corpus christianum* made it difficult to conceive a society in which opposing belief systems held similar privileges. Both Charles V and Philip II were convinced that religious uniformity was crucial for the well-being of their Netherlandish realms. Catholic doctrines and rituals had traditionally underpinned Burgundian–Habsburg dynastic rule.[23] The

[20] Pettegree, 'Religion', 68.
[21] Van Bruaene, '*In Principio*', 69–71; Duke, *Reformation*, 1–59; Marnef, 'The Netherlands', 344–52; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 20–43.
[22] Quoted in Marnef, *Antwerp*, 54.    [23] Arnade, *Beggars*, 12–49; Führer, *Die Kirchen*.

repression of religious dissent was therefore regarded as a personal spiritual duty as much as a social and political necessity. Historians have noted that the persecution of heterodoxy in the Habsburg Low Countries was exceptionally intense, in particular in comparison to surrounding states. Until the start of the uprisings in 1566, about 1,300 men and women were executed for their religious beliefs. Many thousands escaped into exile. Protestant safe havens in England, the Holy Roman Empire and the Swiss Confederation accommodated sizeable communities of evangelicals from the Netherlands.[24] The strict religious policy of the Habsburg government forced its citizens to define their eclectic 'Catholic' identity more closely, but it also encouraged the development of separatist strands of Protestantism on the ground. From the 1540s, the ideas of John Calvin and his followers gained in popularity. This Reformed Protestantism presented evangelical dissenters with a model for an alternative, underground church organisation and offered clear doctrinal guidelines. Calvin's blueprint proved well suited to the conditions of suppressed evangelical communities across Europe.[25]

Habsburg attempts to keep the *corpus christianum* pure and uniform met with growing opposition. By the early 1560s a considerable number of urban magistrates and nobles openly questioned the effectiveness of the draconic heresy laws. Some officials considered the prescribed death penalty to be too harsh or sympathised with the agenda of Protestant reformers. Others found the implementation of the placards practically impossible and claimed that they led to arbitrary justice. These political and religious moderates did not reject the importance of a single *corpus christianum*. Rather, they believed that civic unity might be better sustained if the government allowed particular religious groups to enjoy certain freedoms. Examples of this alternative model could be found in neighbouring France, where the monarchy had recently experimented with forms of religious coexistence. Several German towns had adopted bi-confessional arrangements as well. The mounting refusal of local authorities to execute Philip II's religious policies also echoed their resistance against legislative centralisation. Because heresy was seen as treason against God and hence divine princely rule, the heresy laws had been issued by the central royal government. In this way, opposition to Habsburg political reform became intertwined with the resistance to Philip II's religious agenda.[26]

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[24] Pettegree, *Foreign Protestant*; Schilling, *Niederländische Exulanten*.

[25] Duke, *Reformation*, 71–100, 152–74; Pettegree, 'Religion', 67–83; Tracy, *The Founding*, 66–8; Woltjer, *Op weg*, 137–224, 295–311.

[26] Duke, *Reformation*, 157–72; Van Nierop, 'Similar Problems', 38–51; Woltjer, *Op weg*, 295–311, 368–72.

A planned reorganisation of bishoprics revealed the forces of this emerging grand coalition. From the late 1550s, Philip sought to implement a new diocesan infrastructure in the Low Countries. The scheme would facilitate royal control over church affairs, improve the quality of clergy and monitor the suppression of heresy. It aligned with recent guidelines from the Council of Trent (1545–63) that aimed to reaffirm Catholic doctrine and reform the church's pastoral and administrative structure. In the Netherlands, the ambitious proposals provoked widespread opposition. Nobles deplored the higher standards for clerical appointments. Monasteries resisted their incorporation in, and financial contribution to, the new bishoprics. Local towns worried about the impact of the reorganisation on their established privileges. The association of the plans with unpopular heresy persecutions made matters worse.[27]

Despite this lack of support, Philip II ordered the implementation of the new bishoprics in 1561. The king also enforced full compliance with the heresy laws. Confronted with continuing demands to adapt his religious policies, he told the royal governor in Brussels in 1565 that 'I cannot refrain from telling you that considering the condition of religious affairs in the Netherlands as I understand it, this is no time to make any alteration.' Philip went on to argue that the recent drop in heresy persecutions actually fuelled the unrest in the Netherlands: 'I think that the cause of the past evil and its subsequent growth and advance had been negligence, leniency and duplicity of the judges.'[28] Whereas the Netherlandish opposition pointed to France as an alternative model, the king used the situation in the neighbouring state to demonstrate what dangers religious diversity would bring: 'The flames are spreading everywhere and if those realms [of France] do not make haste to quench them they could be consumed in them beyond remedy.'[29] In a letter to his cousin Maximilian II of Austria, who had also been pursuing an accommodating policy, Philip argued that 'To believe that a passion as great as the one which surrounds the choice of religion . . . can be settled by gentleness and concessions, or by other means that avoid firmness and punishment, is to be greatly deceived.'[30] Philip's uncompromising attitude towards religious heterodoxy never diminished in the following years. Events in his home country Spain, notably the uprisings of the Morisco minority in 1568–71, may in fact have reinforced his views about the inherent dangers

[27] Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 74–9; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 74–80; Postma, *Viglius*, 197–214; Tracy, *The Founding*, 66–73.
[28] Kossmann and Mellink, *Texts*, 55.     [29] Quoted in Kamen, *Philip of Spain*, 113.
[30] Quoted in Parker, *The Grand Strategy*, 93.

of dissent. An obsession with purity and conformity also reigned supreme in Spanish court circles in this period.

### Iconoclasm

By 1565, opposing views about religious divisions and royal governance in the Netherlands had led to a paralysing crisis. A temporary downturn of the economy fuelled the unrest. In April 1566 a group of 200 nobles formally asked the governor, Margaret of Parma, to suspend the heresy laws. According to legend, one of Margaret's advisors called the petitioners 'geux' or beggars, thus giving the future rebels their nickname. Uncertain how to respond, Margaret of Parma answered in vague, diplomatic terms. Her promise to plead for some form of 'moderation' caused confusion about the government's position. In some areas it led to concessions to Protestants, which gave them a strong psychological boost. Over the course of the spring, exiled evangelicals returned from abroad and expressed themselves openly in 'hedge' sermons. These gatherings attracted large crowds. On 14 July it was recorded that Calvinist ministers preached to no fewer than 25,000 listeners outside Antwerp's city gates.[31] At around the same time a government official in Kortrijk summarised the worrying messages that were spread during these evangelical events:

> the audacity of the Calvinist preachers in this area has grown so great that in their sermons they admonish the people that it is not enough to remove all idolatry from their hearts; they must also remove it from their sight. Little by little, it seems, they are trying to impress upon their hearers the need to pillage the churches and abolish all images.[32]

Clearly, not all those who frequented the open-air sermons regarded themselves as Protestants, let alone confirmed Calvinists. Nor were they inclined to follow up on calls to attack traditional Catholic worship. But reports like these demonstrate that the eruption of iconoclasm in August 1566 was not entirely unexpected either. 'The town of Ypres', a Brussels official noted on 2 August, 'is in turmoil on account of the daring of the populace inside and outside who go to the open-air services in their thousands, armed and defended as if they were off to perform some great exploit of war.'[33] On 10 August a group of activist evangelicals indeed turned on the church of the monastery of St Laurence in Steenvoorde, west Flanders. The men had just listened to a sermon by

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[31] Marnef, *Antwerp*, 88–9; Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 68–76; Tracy, *The Founding*, 69–71.
[32] Quoted in Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 75. See also Crew, *Calvinist Preaching*.
[33] The quote is from the President of the Privy Council, Viglius Aytta. Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 76.

the returned Calvinist exile and preacher Sebastian Matte. Inspired by his militant call to cleanse the church of Catholic idolatry, they smashed its images and objects. This was the start of widespread destruction in churches, chapels and convents across the Low Countries. On 20 August, the 'iconoclastic fury' reached the metropolis of Antwerp. Eyewitnesses were perplexed by the speed and rigour of the movement. An English agent in the city reported how 'all the churches, chapels and houses of religion [are] utterly defaced, and no kind of thing left whole within them, but broken and utterly destroyed'. The principal church of Our Lady resembled 'a hell, with above 10,000 torches burning, and such a noise as if heaven and earth had got together, with falling of images and beating down of costly works'.[34] In Ghent a man was shocked to see the canals littered with pages torn from the books of the ransacked library of the Dominican friary. It was as if, he wrote, 'very large snowflakes had fallen into the water'.[35] A nun in 's-Hertogenbosch recorded a similar scene:

From the Grey Friars' church they entered our church on the Uilenburg about four o'clock in the afternoon of the Eve of St. Bartholomew, being Friday. They came in like madmen. They smashed everything to bits, namely three carved gilt reredoses and the stalls and chests and [broke] all the woodwork there in pieces. They carried on so dreadfully as if they would cast down the church; they stole whatever they fancied and took it away. And when they had nothing more to do there, they entered the nuns' choir, where they destroyed fine altarpieces and many books and they took the habits and veils and carried off all the cloaks. Whenever they came across paintings of our dear Lord, they would destroy these more thoroughly than the other paintings.[36]

The organisation and extensiveness of the iconoclasm varied. In some towns the attacks showed signs of coordination by underground Calvinist consistories. Elsewhere the image-breaking was carried out by wandering armed groups or was initiated by local authorities.[37] Scholars contend that despite their frenzied character, the attacks on churches served particular purposes. First, image-breaking aimed to expose the failings of specific Catholic doctrines. By damaging sacred objects such as relics or representations of the Virgin Mary, the Protestant iconoclasts sought to show that these artefacts did not possess any divine powers at all. The destruction of what they regarded as an idolatrous religious culture was typically reinforced by symbolic cleansing exercises or mocking rituals.[38] Second,

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[34] Duke, 'Eye-witness Account'. About the iconoclasm in Antwerp see Marnef, *Antwerp*, 88–92; Scheerder, *De beeldenstorm*, 37–42.
[35] Quoted by Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 6.    [36] Duke, 'Contemporary Account'.
[37] Scheerder, *De beeldenstorm*; Marnef, *Antwerp*, 88–105; Duke, *Reformation*, 125–51; Rooze-Stouthamer, *Hervorming*, 226–39.
[38] Arnade, *Beggars*, 111–12; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 14–17.

then, the assault on churches was a deliberate form of spiritual purifica-
tion. As Alastair Duke has emphasised, iconoclastic riots were not limited
to visual images, as some scholars in the past implicitly assumed. They
tended to focus on altars, monstrances (in which the Eucharist was kept)
and other key symbols of Catholic worship. In this way Protestants
claimed church space for their own, purified religious services.[39]
Despite its destructive and brutal character, the 'iconoclastic fury' of
1566 was a focused, 'rational' affair.

It is significant that iconoclasts generally left symbols of Habsburg rule
and local authority untouched. This sensitivity towards emblems of sec-
ular power did not, of course, diminish the political implications of
Protestant iconoclasm.[40] In the eyes of many contemporaries, the assault
on sacred space directly challenged divine Habsburg authority. For those
who perceived the sacred as a legitimising base for secular rule, efforts to
separate the two made little sense. What is more, by claiming church space
for their own services, the vocal Protestant minority threatened the ideal of
a single, public *corpus christianum*.

The cleansing of churches coincided with the harassment of priests and
members of religious convents. In Antwerp, Godevaert van Haecht noted
how some clergy escaped or went into hiding after the rioting broke out.
Some religious dressed in worldly clothes, anxious that they would be
recognised and mocked on the streets.[41] Willem Lindanus later recalled
how he left The Hague in a rush, taking only some books with him. During
the perilous journey through the Holland countryside, Lindanus strength-
ened his soul by singing psalms and pious songs.[42] It was reported that in
's-Hertogenbosch, Utrecht and Alkmaar, several members of convent
communities were even expelled by force. These local campaigns were
targeted particularly at Franciscans and Dominicans. Intimidated by the
ransackings, some committed Antwerp Catholics celebrated Mass with a
priest in their house. 'Such is the conversion now,' Maximilian Morillon
remarked, 'that the Catholics must keep silent and sectaries preach.'[43]
This was indeed how many experienced the tense religious climate in the
days following the assaults.

Small wonder, then, that the flight of priests and royal authorities also
met with criticism. Weren't these men supposed to protect the sacred
religious order? In May 1567 about 200 Catholic citizens returned to

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[39] Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 183–8.
[40] Arnade, *Beggars*, 116, 120–4. More examples in Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 184–5; Rooze-
Stouthamer, *Hervorming*, 229–33.
[41] Van Haecht, *Kroniek*, I, 100, 104, 110, 114. Also Marnef, *Antwerp*, 103–4. Examples for
Middelburg in Rooze-Stouthamer, *Hervorming*, 240.
[42] Van Beuningen, *Wilhelmus Lindanus*, 193.     [43] Quoted in Marnef, *Antwerp*, 103.

Amsterdam after they had left the town during the waves of iconoclasm and Calvinist uprising. The local Franciscan priest Hendrik van Biesten loathed what he regarded as treacherous behaviour. 'One cannot regard [these refugees] as pious citizens, who in times of trouble and crisis leave their town and escape from where they were born.'[44] Van Biesten was particularly cross at 'men of honour' like Sybrant Occo, treasurer and former burgomaster of Amsterdam, who had neglected their civic responsibilities.[45] For escaping priests flight was a sensitive issue, too. What was the state of the church if its spiritual shepherds left their flocks when Catholicism was in danger? In Antwerp there was little sympathy for a group of escaped 'papists and monks' from Delft who arrived by boat in October 1566.[46] It is indicative that Willem Lindanus in his letters later exaggerated the violence in The Hague, in an attempt to justify his flight.[47]

### Catholic responses

Historians have been puzzled by the lack of Catholic resistance to Protestant activity in 1566. After all, Catholics still constituted a large majority of the population. Sources suggest that local officials were often overwhelmed by events, were unsure how to react, or lacked the resources to intervene. 'I found myself in such great perplexity', a burgomaster of Middelburg later recalled, 'that I scarcely knew what was to be done'.[48] The paralysing political crisis in Brussels contributed to this virtual collapse of royal authority. But how should we explain the passivity of ordinary Catholics, who were witnessing first-hand the denigration of their sacred world? In Antwerp, an Englishman was surprised that 'the thing was done so quiet and so still'. He even noted that 'there were many in the church lookers on'.[49] There is some evidence to suggest that the cleansing campaign of the Calvinist minority tapped into more widespread feelings of anti-clericalism. Some 'protestantising Catholics' sympathised with the call for a spiritual purge of their church. In any case, they were unwilling to defend the possessions of well-endowed monastic communities, whose moral lifestyle left much to be desired.

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[44] Van Biesten, 'Vervolg', 421.
[45] For the context in Amsterdam see Dudok van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse*, I, 59–91; Van Nierop, *Beeldenstorm*; Tracy, 'A Premature Counter-Reformation'; Woltjer, 'Het conflict'.
[46] Van Haecht, *Kroniek*, I, 115.
[47] Van Beuningen, *Wilhelmus Lindanus*, 192–4, 398–9. See also Chapter 2.
[48] Quoted in Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 80. More examples in Rooze-Stouthamer, *Hervorming*, 239–48.
[49] Duke, 'Eye-witness Account'.

Others seem to have interpreted the dramatic events as divine punishment for the sins of society. They urged their fellow Catholics to contemplate their own shortcomings. Finally, a reluctance to intervene could stem from the fear of escalating strife. In neighbouring France similar destructions in churches had recently been followed by lynchings of citizens. Diaries and correspondence demonstrate that people in the Netherlands were well informed about the stories of gruesome massacres inflicted on Catholics and Calvinists in France. The passivity of Netherlandish Catholics also becomes more understandable when we consider similar responses of lay Catholics to Protestant activism in England and in German states.[50]

In any case, such conspicuous passivity to Protestant assaults did not diminish the psychological shock and anger which the events of 1566 spawned among traditional believers. The Ghent diary writer Marcus van Vaernewijck noted how some Catholics 'became sick, others, men and women, at night lay in their beds sighing and weeping, wringing their hands'. They could not understand why God had not intervened or sent 'notable signs in the skies' during the wave of destruction.[51] Damage to the Eucharist and holy relics was deeply distressing to those who believed these held divine powers. What is more, iconoclasm had wrought severe damage upon a visual world and a material culture that had been built up over centuries. The loss of venerable artworks appalled citizens who took pride in them. In Mechelen, an infuriated sculptor approached Calvinists 'with a sword' in a desperate attempt to prevent the image-breaking.[52] A representative of a crafts guild in Antwerp tried to stop an attack on their communal church altar. Chronicler Godevaert van Haecht had strong Lutheran sympathies, but showed no enthusiasm for the annihilation of complete libraries: 'The churches are scattered with torn manuscripts and books; indeed, in some rooms one walked through shredded papers reaching to the knees'.[53] Even some Calvinists displayed an ambivalent attitude towards the rich artistic legacy of the Netherlands. Image-breakers in Middelburg agreed to save a celebrated altarpiece by Jan Gossaert. In Leiden the authorities quickly removed Lucas van Leyden's *The Last Judgement* from its principal church of St Peter. The

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[50] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 19, 48–9, 73–4, 197–8. Compare Van Nierop, 'And Ye Shall Hear', 69–86; Van Nierop, 'Similar Problems'; Pettegree, 'Religion'; Spaans, 'Catholicism and Resistance'.

[51] Quoted in Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 17. The full reference in Van Vaernewijck, *Van die beroerlicke tijden*, I, 188.

[52] Van Vaernewijck, *Van die beroerlicke tijden*, I, 186.

[53] Van Haecht, *Kroniek*, I, 99. Attempts to protect monastic libraries were undertaken in Amsterdam. See Van Nierop, *Beeldenstorm*, 37.

triptych also survived the iconoclastic campaigns of 1572–73 and eventually ended up in the town hall in 1577.[54]

Some Catholics did, in fact, undertake organised opposition. In several towns close to the French border, including Lille, Namur and Douai, Protestant iconoclasts encountered violent and effective resistance. In the countryside of Hainaut and near Tournai, Catholic volunteers joined quickly assembled government troops. Even in areas where town governments appeared hesitant, groups of angry Catholics decided to take up arms for themselves. Recent scholarship has shown that such local Catholic counter-offensives were often aided by the presence of Jesuit priests. Representatives of this relatively new, combative order called upon citizens to fight for their church and purge *corpus christianum* from heretical infections.[55] Although the exact range and content of Jesuit sermons in 1566 is unknown, examples from France provide circumstantial evidence. We know that during the French wars of religion Jesuit priests successfully mobilised a militant Counter-Reformation lay party. It is also revealing that Calvinist image-breakers in Antwerp and Tournai viewed the Jesuits as their most formidable enemies. In both cities they tried to expel members of the order during the uprisings of 1566.[56] All the same, in the summer and autumn of 1566 the Jesuits were never able to assume the sort of role they played in polarised French communities. As we will see, their numbers in the Netherlands were very small and the order had struggled to establish footings in Habsburg territory.[57]

To some extent this was true for representatives of politicised, militant strands of Catholicism in general. For all its severity, the suppression of Protestantism in the Habsburg Netherlands had largely been a clerical and governmental affair. Judith Pollmann has observed that Netherlandish priests were reluctant to involve the laity in the fight against heresy or even to instruct them in doctrinal issues. After all, engaging them might actually introduce dangerous heterodox ideas to ordinary men and women. Anxious about the possibility of uncontrolled religious experiments, clerics in the Low Countries preferred to present the spread of Protestantism as God's punishment for the sins of society. Individual penitence and piety were the appropriate means for lay Catholics to counter Protestantism in their midst and regain God's

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[54] Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 184; Freedberg, 'Art and Iconoclasm', 76.
[55] Hageman, *Het kwade exempel*; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 68–74. See also Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 149–50; Scheerder, *De beeldenstorm*, 18–96.
[56] Poncelet, *Histoire*, I, 272–6.
[57] Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 1–6; Van Hoeck, *Schets*, 3–18; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 73. See also Chapter 4.

favour.[58] Clearly, this traditional message did little to mobilise men and women in the summer of 1566. It is illustrative that doctrinal and diocese reforms along the lines of the Council of Trent divided Netherlandish clerics as well. We saw how the new bishopric scheme, which aimed to improve pastoral care and raise educational standards, had met with resistance from clerical and secular authorities alike. Tridentine spirituality – broadly conceived as a more strictly defined, confessional type of Catholicism – was therefore a minor phenomenon in the Low Countries on the eve of the revolt. Its representatives were confined mostly to academic circles, particularly at the universities of Leuven and Douai and their respective Jesuit houses. It is telling that some of the later leaders of the Tridentine enterprise in the Netherlands studied at Leuven during the 1540s and 1550s. Among them was Lindanus, who developed sympathies for Jesuit teaching strategies at an early stage. When he resided in Paris in 1552 Lindanus befriended Everardus Mercurianus, the future general of the order.[59] While some of the foundations for a Counter-Reformation movement were visible in the pre-revolt Low Countries, it took the violent confrontation with Protestantism to popularise and spread its agenda.

### The duke of Alba

Over the course of 1566–67, the royal government in Brussels succeeded in regaining control in the Low Countries. Supported by financial resources from Madrid, Margaret of Parma raised troops that crushed the ill-prepared Calvinist militias. By spring 1567 the Catholic order had been restored. Internal divisions within the opposition also contributed to this rapid collapse of the uprisings. Iconoclastic violence had undermined the credibility of the Protestant call for religious freedoms, driving many moderate Catholics into the arms of the government.[60] Meanwhile, Philip II prepared a campaign that would forever purge the troubled Low Countries of rebellion and heresy. The king had been contemplating military intervention for some time. The events of 1566 confirmed his views about the need for rigorous disciplinary action. Echoing previous Habsburg practices, the military operation was designed to enforce obedience by exemplary punishment and subsequent pardon. The first, brutal part of the job was given to Philip's most able general, Don

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[58] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 46–67.
[59] Van Beuningen, *Wilhelmus Lindanus*, 24–5, 31, 386–90; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 79–80.
[60] Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 36–9.

Fernand Alvarez de Toledo, duke of Alba. The king intended to visit his northern dominions to spread the message of clemency after Alba had finished his punitive task.[61]

In August 1567 Alba arrived in Brussels, accompanied by a large foreign army. In the preceding months, perhaps as many as 60,000 Protestants and worried citizens had escaped the Low Countries. Towns in England and the Holy Roman Empire accommodated the majority of this evangelical-minded expatriate diaspora. Alba made little effort to reconcile the thousands of exiles with the government. In line with his royal instructions, he embarked on a disciplinary campaign. A newly established court, the Council of Troubles, was set to prosecute about 12,000 men and women who had somehow been involved in the troubles. More than a thousand of them were put to death, including a number of high-profile aristocrats. Numerous exiles were sentenced *in absentia*. Among them was William of Nassau, prince of Orange, who had fled to his German estate in 1567. The Council of Troubles thus turned the expatriates into permanent *personae non gratae*.[62] Eager to exploit his successes, Alba also ordered changes to the urban landscape that reinforced the idea of a cleansed *corpus christianum*. Houses and other possessions of rebels were confiscated or ritually destroyed. In a number of towns Alba had imposing military fortresses erected.[63]

The enforcement of obedience coincided with attempts to reinvigorate Catholicism. With single-minded determination Alba imposed several Tridentine-inspired reforms. Notably, the protracted diocesan project was finally put into effect. The government ordered that damage to churches be repaired and encouraged the commissioning of new art works.[64] Alba's energetic initiatives did little to win over the hearts and minds of most Catholics, though. Some had initially welcomed the duke's operation, but its harsh and seemingly arbitrary justice system caused resentment in the following years. The maintenance of Spanish and Italian troops posed a heavy burden on their hosting towns. By surrounding himself with foreign military officers, Alba alienated loyalist office-holders and the Catholic clerical leadership from his government.[65] Even Jesuit priests were disappointed when they discovered that the governor had no sympathy for their order or its innovative Counter-Reformation strategies. Discontent about Alba's authoritarian style further increased

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[61] Kamen, *The Duke of Alba*, 75–87; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 27–54.
[62] Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 155–65.
[63] Arnade, *Beggars*, 166–211; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 27–54
[64] Spicer, 'After Iconoclasm', 415–24.
[65] Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 6–9; Arnade, *Beggars*, 166–211; Kamen, *The Duke of Alba*, 91–3; Soen, *Vredehandel*, 81–91.

when the duke introduced new taxes in 1569–70. Philip II's concurrent decision to postpone and eventually cancel his visit to the Low Countries struck a fatal blow to the Habsburg cause. The belated proclamation of the royal pardon in 1570 was greeted with lukewarm enthusiasm.[66] By repressing the revolt of the late 1560s, Alba effectively bred a renewed rebellious movement in the 1570s.

### An ambiguous legacy

The 'wonder year' 1566 had a varied impact on Catholic culture. The vast destructions of iconoclasm left lasting scars on its material infrastructure. The loss of artworks, the disappearance of holy relics and the damage to church buildings were felt for decades. It is telling that the organisers of the Rijksmuseum's exhibition *Art before the Iconoclasm* struggled to recover the material richness of this lost pre-revolt world. The events of 1566 were also traumatic because they had led to a temporary collapse of Catholic monopoly. The lack of government protection, the experience of flight and, above all, the absence of any divine intervention raised existential questions among traditional Catholics. Yet, in forcing a reckoning with these doubts and troubling thoughts, the memory of 1566 turned out to be a creative force as well.

First, the experience served as a wake-up call for the Catholic community. Iconoclasm did significant reputational damage to the opposition coalition and confronted hesitant Catholics with the 'true face' of public Protestantism. A number of historians have noted that in late 1566 the first signs of a popular Counter-Reformation movement became visible. More specifically, Protestant ideas were effectively challenged and ridiculed in an outpouring of booklets. Some polemical French pamphlets were translated into Dutch.[67] The experience of anarchy and flight also shaped the attitude of Jesuits in the following years. The order increasingly engaged with the troubles in the Netherlands and actively supported the Catholic refugees of the 1570s and 1580s.[68] Second, the devastations triggered new art patronage, prompting painters and sculptors to experiment with innovative styles and compositions. Commissions after 1566 helped to fashion a new, combative type of Catholicism. It would therefore be misleading to view the restoration programmes as mere continuations of what had been in place before. Koenraad Jonckheere has demonstrated how in post-1566 Antwerp painting helped

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[66] Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 45–52; Soen, *Geen pardon*, 171–223.
[67] Marnef, *Antwerp*, 104; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 78–80.
[68] Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 33–40. See Chapter 4.

to rebrand local Catholic culture.[69] Cutting-edge Mannerist works of Michiel Coxie and Anthonis Blocklandt or the sculptures of Willem van Tetrode did much to rejuvenate artistic traditions in the Netherlands.[70] These responses to iconoclasm partly reflected Trent's ideas about the spiritual use of images. Visual emotive expressions and celebrations of martyrdom became the hallmarks of a new, affective Catholic piety. Third, the memory of 1566 was exploited successfully during media wars in the following decades. Catholic polemicists tapped enthusiastically into a catalogue of stories about barbaric Protestant acts of destruction. As exemplary cases of heretical evil, the tales of 1566 were endlessly recycled in later Catholic propaganda. While rebel authors tried hard to downplay the violence or detach themselves from the rioting crowds, the events of 1566 continued to haunt them.[71] In the wake of the violent encounter with public Protestantism, a contrasting Catholic self-consciousness gradually took shape.

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[69] Jonckheere, *Antwerp Art*. See also Freedberg, 'Art and Iconoclasm', 76–78; Van de Velde, 'The Sixteenth Century', 187–92.

[70] Filedt Kok, Halsema-Kubes and Kloek, *Kunst voor de beeldenstorm*, 419–61; Scholten, 'Willem van Tetrode', 53–9.

[71] Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 179–81; Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 36–9, 66–9, 131–44.

## 2    Exodus

### The exiles return

Alba's repressive policy generated contradictory results. While his punitive approach sought to purge Netherlandish society of religious and political dissent, it also created a formidable enemy outside Habsburg territory. By expelling and outlawing large numbers of its citizens, the Alba administration burdened itself with an unresolved exile problem.[1] In German and English host towns thousands of Netherlandish émigrés banded together in Calvinist-inspired strangers' churches. The security threat posed by this expatriate community became fully apparent when the Habsburg Netherlands were inundated by a new wave of uprisings in 1572. This time, the rebellion proved more resilient than it had been in 1566–67, and the result was four years of gruesome violence between rebel militias and royalist armies. Surprisingly, the renewed revolt was concentrated in the provinces of Holland and Zeeland, though the heartland of dissent had previously been in Brabant and Flanders. Historians have therefore long debated its underlying causes.[2] The uprisings were not quite the spontaneous liberation struggles they were once believed to have been, nor was their progress purely the result of military factors or William of Orange's charismatic leadership. The rebel armies gained ground because they could build on widespread popular discontent towards the duke of Alba's policies. In recent years, scholars have become more interested in the role of public opinion and the impact of printed propaganda during the 1570s.[3] This focus on the media landscape in the urbanised Low Countries has highlighted the crucial importance of those who had been outlawed by Alba's regime.

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[1] Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 118–19. Compare Rogier, 'Over karakter'.

[2] Boogman, 'De overgang'; Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 126–55; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 169–78; Van Nierop, *Treason*, 51–71; Tracy, *The Founding*, 77–134.

[3] Arnade, *Beggars*, 212–303; Deen, 'Handwritten Propaganda', 207–26; Duke, *Dissident Identities*; Horst, *De Opstand*; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*; Pollmann and Spicer, *Public Opinion*.

Hardened by the experience of displacement and inspired by the evangelicalism of the Calvinist exile churches, many émigrés were keen supporters of a regime change in the Netherlands. From their safe havens in England and the Holy Roman Empire, the exiles provided vital financial, military and moral backing to the uprisings against Alba. Indeed, when William of Orange – himself an exile since 1567 – led the army that invaded the Netherlands in 1572, groups of expatriates followed suit. Habsburg officials in the Netherlands soon became aware of their destabilising activities. On 24 May 1572, for example, the king's stadholder in Holland, Maximilian of Boussu, warned Alba that 'some exiles are starting to appear in the streets' of the harbour town of Hoorn.[4] By writing letters, distributing leaflets and acting as informal agents of the prince of Orange, the returning fugitives were able to kindle discontent, manipulate local public opinion and mobilise their networks of relatives and friends.[5] It is significant that the few towns that resisted rebel pressure in 1572, including Amsterdam, Middelburg and Utrecht, had successfully barred the entrance of returning exiles.

The exiles' involvement did not end with these military-backed uprisings. Scholars of the Reformation have long noted that in the years that followed, Calvinists returning from German and English towns established a Reformed church order in Holland and Zeeland. The refugee congregations of Emden, London and elsewhere provided the model for the new Protestant churches in rebel territory. By styling themselves as the primary victims of Alba's tyrannical regime, the exiles also set themselves up for their political rehabilitation. Many returning émigrés received leading positions in captured towns and in Orange's improvised administration. Thus, shedding their status as outlaws, the exiles quickly occupied centre stage as the protagonists of the new religious and political order of the 'liberated' Netherlands. In the following decades, many of their descendants would become members of the leading commercial and political dynasties of the emerging Dutch Republic.[6]

The agency of the Protestant expatriates in the years after 1572 is pertinent, because it furthers our understanding of the subsequent Catholic-exile experience. First, it is clear that returning Calvinists were largely responsible for the Catholic exodus after 1572. In advancing their agenda, the exiles triggered the emigration of those who had thrown in their lot with the Habsburg regime. Second, the tale of the Protestant refugees is illuminating because their transformative impact on rebel

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[4] Van Vloten, *Nederlands opstand*, lxiii.
[5] Kluit, *Historie*, 512–19; Van Nierop, *Het foute Amsterdam*, 12–19.
[6] Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 157–60, 179–84.

society foreshadowed a similar role that Catholic refugees would play more than a decade later. If the former were instrumental in the foundation of a Protestant Dutch Republic, the latter fostered the emergence of a refashioned Catholic-Habsburg monarchy in the Southern Netherlands after 1585. Despite their contrasting profiles, groups of Protestant and Catholic refugees were intrinsically connected in the revolt.

### Catholics on the run

The prince of Orange presented himself as the natural leader of the rejuvenated rebellion of the 1570s. Keen to establish a broad coalition against Alba, the rebel-aristocrat sought to emphasise that his movement was certainly not a war against Catholicism. Nor did he want to create the impression that the revolt challenged the authority of King Philip II. In propagandistic messages, Orange repeatedly insisted that the current troubles represented the Netherlanders' shared struggle against an alien, Hispanic regime. By exploiting xenophobia and framing Alba's administration as tyrannical, the prince tried to mould a contrasting and broadly defined rebel programme. Its narrative tended to focus on the 'restoration' of supposedly 'lost freedoms', a cause with which many could identify.[7] Alba himself was further discredited through the use of anti-Semitic tropes, which were linked to Spain's dubious history of religious pluriformity. Typical was a public proclamation issued in June 1572, in which Orange called the duke 'this child of unbelieving Jews, whose hatred of us is secretly inspired by his not being of Christian origin.'[8] The prince was sensitive to the fraught religious implications of his own campaign. To accommodate committed Protestants as well as hesitant Catholics, Orange proposed a form of regulated Christian coexistence in the 'liberated' Netherlands. Through bi-confessional arrangements, believers of opposing churches could still participate in a single, unbroken *corpus christianum*.

Still, Catholics in 1572 had reasons to worry. The self-declared leader of the revolt may have promised to leave Catholic worship untouched, but in practice it was unclear how much authority the prince of Orange could exercise towards the ill-disciplined 'beggar' troops. The arrival of hundreds of resentful exiles from Emden, London and elsewhere also did not bode well for the Catholic establishment. Within weeks of the invasion by rebel forces, stories spread about atrocities committed against

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[7] Arnade, *Beggars*, 212–35; Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 57–76.
[8] Kossmann and Mellink, *Texts*, 95. Compare Arnade, *Beggars*, 304–5

Catholic clergy. In early July, Orange's lieutenant, Willem van der Marck, lord of Lummen, had nineteen Franciscan priests from Gorinchem tortured and killed. This was only the beginning: during the years of civil war, from 1572 to 1576, priests and female religious regularly fell victim to harassment, rape and murder.[9] Religious tensions were further amplified when Catholic loyalists plotted counter-insurgencies in the towns that had recently opened their gates to Orange and his troops. As a result, defending Catholicism became increasingly associated with supporting Alba's regime. In urban communities not used to the official acceptance of religious diversity, the proposed bi-confessional arrangements proved short-lived. In most Holland and Zeeland towns the authorities felt compelled to temporarily close all church buildings. In 1573 Catholic worship was officially suspended.[10] For all its emphasis on unity and liberty, the Orange-led revolt thus deeply divided local communities. Numerous committed Catholics now pondered escaping to what remained of royalist territory.

Who exactly were these fleeing opponents of the revolt? There is no doubt that only a small minority of the population eventually chose to migrate. Scattered evidence suggests that a few thousand men and women left the rebel towns of Holland and Zeeland in the years 1572–76. Three main categories can be distinguished. A first group consisted of priests and female religious. Most of them simply fled from rebel violence or were driven out of their convents. A typical example was Sister Maria Jansdochter from the Magdalene Convent at Gouda. She later recalled how she had left Gouda in November 1572 after 'on four or five occasions she had suffered when the Beggars had entered the house at night, carrying halberds and drawn knives with which they also threatened the inmates, calling them most shamefully whores of the sacraments and such like.'[11] Catholic clergy also tended to migrate from towns that surrendered to rebel forces as Middelburg did in 1574. In the capitulation treaty it was agreed that religious could leave if they wanted to, but they were not allowed to take any goods, except their clothes. With a number of loyalist citizens, the monks and priests of Middelburg 'were put in boats and escorted to Flanders.'[12] Similarly, in Hoorn the previous year, the local beguines had been driven out of their houses by rebel soldiers and sent to the royalist stronghold of Amsterdam.[13]

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[9] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 6, 274.
[10] Van Nierop, *Treason*; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 97–104; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 24–34.
[11] *DWJ*, I, 48–9.      [12] *A Briefe Rehersall*; Van Biesten, 'Vervolg', 459.
[13] Velius, *Kroniek*, II, 488.

A second group of refugees comprised town magistrates and royal office-holders who contested the legitimacy of the rebellion and the authority of the prince of Orange as the new stadholder of Holland. One of these loyalists was the Gouda magistrate Jan Gerritsz Stempelse. Shortly after the invasion of rebel troops in June 1572, he plotted a counter-attack and tried to open the town's gates to royal forces; he was arrested but managed to flee to Cologne.[14] His wife Elizabeth Gerrits stayed behind, apparently to protect the family's possessions: she was later expelled by the rebels as well. In 1574, separated from her husband and lacking a source of income, Elizabeth was living in the overcrowded refugee enclave of Amsterdam.[15] Here, she was joined by many other laymen and laywomen who preferred a temporary settlement in royal, Catholic territory. They made up a third group of exiles. Often linked to the political-religious establishment through parentage and clientage, these citizens did not want to be involved with rebel rule, opposed the religious freedoms offered to Protestants and were appalled by the recent violence against clergy. Over the course of 1572–73 the few remaining royalist towns in rebel territory, notably Amsterdam and Utrecht, became large centres of asylum. Those who could afford to do so sometimes moved abroad. Dirk Areiaensz from Dordrecht, for example, escaped with his family to Cologne. According to later stories of his daughter Lucretia, the devout Dirk 'simply could not bear' the rebel takeover in Holland and the 'destruction of religious space' in their hometown. He preferred to live in an unspoiled Catholic land where his children could be raised 'in a pious and proper way.'[16] By the end of 1572, a Catholic exile community had thus been born.

### The experience of flight

Flight was a confusing and humiliating experience for Netherlandish Catholics. The few surviving diaries and letters reveal that those who left their homes in the summer of 1572 often did so in a state of shock. Elizabeth van der Werve, for one, later explained to royal officials in Brussels that she was unable to send them the papers of her late husband, since she had been forced to escape Leiden in a rush, 'because of the very sudden revolt of this town.'[17] In Zierikzee a fleeing priest quickly buried

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[14] *Correspondentie Willem van Oranje*, 9461. About him: Hibben, *Gouda*, 48, 52, 70–2, 266; Boeree, 'Het verraad', 195–219; Droog, 'De oprichting', 109–12; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 18–24.

[15] *DWJ*, I, 388–89; II, 475.      [16] Oly, *Levens*, I, fo. 231v–232v.

[17] NA, Grafelijkheidsrekenkamer, 683b, Elizabeth van der Werve (?) to royal officials, 24 November 1575.

all his money in a pit, hopeful that his hasty flight would be temporary.[18] The Augustinian friar Wouter Jacobsz noted how fugitives who arrived in the Catholic safe haven of Amsterdam were traumatised; 'They could be seen in the churches and on the street with tears in their eyes, weeping in public because they found themselves now utterly forlorn, not knowing where to turn for consolation.'[19]

It was not just the confrontation with flight and displacement that shocked Catholics. Travelling to royalist bastions proved highly dangerous. From spring 1572, roads and waterways in Holland had turned into war zones, controlled by wandering, ill-disciplined armies. If refugees managed to avoid these soldiers, they were still at the mercy of wayside robbers. 'Because this exodus was well known to the wicked', the same Wouter Jacobsz remarked the following year, 'these therefore took to the road to rob and plunder wherever they could take them by surprise.'[20] When in September 1573 a priest arrived in Amsterdam, it was observed that he 'looked just like a beggar, clad in wretched clothes, which were threadbare and worn out.' The man claimed 'he had been captured by the Beggars [rebels] and could not get away until he had revealed where their property, utensils and other things had been taken or hidden in Schoonhoven.'[21]

Escaping magistrates faced similar risks. Wouter Jacobsz recorded in detail how burgomaster Jan Gerrit Hey from Gouda had escaped in June 1573:

He left in the early morning on board a dung-ship, wearing over his clothes a pair of breeches used by rustics and other strange garments. Once aboard the vessel, he concealed himself in the forecastle. The ship, in which this good man sat in hiding, reached the *Donkersluis*, where it remained for five or six hours, until the passage was clear for it to break out of the town. In this way the ship shot the boom, not without considerable peril, but the wonderful Lord preserved him. When this ship reached the point where it was unloaded, some country people were hired, who did not know his identity. They brought him in a boat straight across the country and they landed near Utrecht, where his sons were to look after him.[22]

Wouter himself experienced how much Holland's countryside had been transformed when he walked from Amsterdam to nearby Haarlem in the summer of 1573:

And as I travelled there I saw on the way how badly the countryside had been ravaged as a result of the earlier troubles in this present year. I found very few houses between Haarlem and Amsterdam, which had not been burnt and all the

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[18] NA, Van Dorp, 915, Report about discovery of buried treasure in the house of priest called Montibus, 1574.
[19] *DWJ*, I, 319.    [20] *DWJ*, I, 249.    [21] *DWJ*, I, 301.    [22] *DWJ*, I, 267.

churches we saw along this route were either completely destroyed by fire or at least shockingly wrecked and broken down. In many places the land lay waste, without any animals. I also noticed on my journey, among the many dead animals, whose carcases lay scattered at intervals along the way, the naked corpse of a person, which had shrivelled up in the sun. It lay almost flat in the middle of the track, nearly in the ruts left by the carts, so that even the most impassive person would have been startled by what he saw. I was most astonished that no one had troubled to remove the corpse from the track or to cover it with some earth; instead the body lay there like the remains of some animal.[23]

Small wonder that Catholic refugees often travelled in groups, as did the Haarlem brothers who arrived in Antwerp in November 1572. Jan and Pieter Arendsz told the local authorities how 'perilous' their journey had been and how they had been forced to leave behind 'their mother, friends, Pieter's wife and his children'.[24] Other Catholics chose to seek the protection of the royal army, but this strategy was not free from risks either. In July 1572, members of the Court of Holland deemed The Hague no longer safe and decided to move to Utrecht via Amsterdam. Escorted by a sizeable royal army, the officials travelled northwards along the North Sea coast. On their way, they were joined by a considerable train of wealthy burghers from The Hague, including 'their wives, children, clothes, commodities and their jewels.'[25] When the convoy encamped near Haarlem, they were attacked by rebel forces, and several hundred people were said to have died in the ensuing fighting.[26]

### Catholic dilemmas

As we saw in Chapter 1, small groups of Catholics had fled during the iconoclasm of 1566. But the formation of a self-styled counter-regime in 1572 turned the decision to emigrate into a more profound, public statement about the legitimacy of the revolt. What is more, the implementation of public Protestant worship in rebel towns forced Catholics to reconsider what it actually meant to be 'Catholic'. How did common citizens make sense of these dilemmas? Who could tell them whether escaping from rebel territory was the right decision: morally justified, legally permitted and divinely sanctioned?[27] The priest Wouter Jacobsz was one of the many Catholic émigrés who contemplated these questions. Originally a

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[23] *DWJ*, I, 286.
[24] Felix Archief, Schepenbank, 330. The registers also mention the arrival in Antwerp in 1572 of Leiden magistrate Cornelis van Veen.
[25] Accounts in Van Biesten, 'Vervolg', 442–3; Verwer, *Memoriaelbouck*, 10.
[26] The story is in Bor, *Oorsprongk*, I, 396–7. See also Smit, 'De omzetting', 179–93.
[27] Parts of the following were published previously in Janssen, 'Quo Vadis?'

prior of the monastery of Stein near Gouda, Wouter escaped to Amsterdam in the summer of 1572. His relative fame is based on an extensive diary begun after his arrival in the host town. As Henk van Nierop showed a decade ago, for Wouter Jacobsz diary writing was a spiritual exercise that enabled him to make greater sense of the dramatic turn in his life.[28] In this way, his autobiography captures the thoughts and anxieties that gripped the Catholic refugee community in the 1570s.

In his search for meaning and guidance, Wouter regularly turned to the Old Testament. By comparing contemporary refugees to 'Israel's children', for example, the author linked his own experiences to key narratives of the Christian tradition. It has been observed that Wouter's diary-writing was not so much an exercise in self-reflection as it was the use of a focused, spiritual tool that allowed him to frame recent Catholic suffering into recognisable biblical categories. It is notable that other Catholic refugees also tended to punctuate their analysis of the present troubles with examples from Scripture. Their texts characteristically employed cyclical readings of history, in which contemporary events were described as repetitions of biblical and sacred history. This practice enabled refugees to find practical solutions to their concerns. Biblical precedents provided the most authoritative model for proper action in the present.

But the identification of parallels between the biblical past and the chaotic present also prompted new questions, since the imagery of exile that could be drawn from these ancient texts proved highly ambiguous. Scholars of the Protestant Reformation have pointed to similar dilemmas among evangelical refugees of a previous generation. Protestant dissenters who contemplated exile had often found that some biblical tales, including the flight of Daniel and the stories of the exiled Israelites, seemed to encourage migration for religious reasons and to glorify the experience of displacement. But other works, such as the apocryphal *Quo vadis* narrative attributed to the Apostle Paul, suggested that an escape from persecution would conflict with God's providence. Such an interpretation was confirmed by the teachings of several patristic authorities, notably Augustine of Hippo, who had also been critical of flight.[29] More positive interpretations of displacement could be found in the notion of *peregrinatio*, a concept regularly used by pilgrims and travelling academics in Renaissance Europe. Authors of contemporary spiritual works, such as the pioneering Jesuit founder Ignatius of Loyola, similarly presented their

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[28] Van Nierop, *Treason*, 1–5, passim.
[29] Schunka, 'Constantia'; Von der Osten-Sacken, 'Erzwungenes und selbstgewähltes Exil', 41–58; Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, 186–88; Wright, 'Marian Exiles', 222–6.

journeys as rewarding religious experiences that had deepened their bond with God.[30]

In addition to these biblical and theological sources, would-be refugees in the sixteenth century found inspiration in classical writings, such as those of Ovid and Virgil. These works did not so much provide immediate answers about the legitimacy of flight from rebel territory as offer helpful reflections on the deeper meanings of exile. Indeed, Catholic citizens Jacques de Slupere and Gislain Bulteel, from Ypres, would draw on this classical heritage in their poems, in which they reflected on their refugee experiences.[31] The frequent use of such narrative models confirms that for sixteenth-century Catholics, perceptions of exile were conditioned by existing biblical and classical semantic categories.

It is more difficult to assess how far such intellectual *exempla* guided the behaviour of Catholics in 1572. Wouter Jacobsz may have referred to biblical teachings to explain his conduct, but it is not always clear if such self-justifying rhetoric had been the cause, or rather the result, of a decision to migrate. As pointed out, the large majority of those who considered themselves Catholic never attempted exile during the rebellion of 1572–76. Doubts about the longevity of the revolt and the dangers of travelling through a war zone played a role in this reluctance to leave, but a number of sources allow us to trace the background of their objections against exile in greater detail. First, it is likely that some Catholics were receptive to the dogmatic principle that escaping was an act of defiance against divine providence. Brad Gregory has shown how all denominations in sixteenth-century Europe hailed martyrdom, rather than exile, as the ultimate way to prove one's steadfastness, piety and sacrifice. The choice to die for the faith and hence imitate Christ, Gregory provocatively argued, should be understood 'not as fanaticism of the fringe, but as exemplary action.'[32] Crucially, the glorification of martyrdom gained momentum in the second half of the sixteenth century, as the Tridentine movement fuelled a renewed interest in early Christian martyrs. As Catholics were encouraged to revisit this ancient legacy, contemporary victims of rebel violence could easily be interpreted as re-enactors of an admirable Catholic tradition.[33] The priests who were killed in Holland in the 1570s indeed became the object of passionate Catholic veneration and continued to serve as role models in the following decades.[34]

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[30] Loyola, *Personal Writings*, 29–38; Schunka, 'Constantia', 189–95.
[31] Enenkel, *Die Erfindung*, 619–40; Bakelants, *La vie*, 67–74.
[32] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 8.
[33] Burschel, *Sterben und Unsterblichkeit*, 197–262; Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 251.
[34] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 274–314; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 181–2; Vermaseren, 'De bronnen'.

Related to such appreciations of martyrdom was the commonly held view that fleeing was an act of cowardice and treason. As we saw previously, Catholic priests who had escaped their parish or convent during the iconoclastic fury of 1566 were criticised. In 1572, the Franciscan priest Hendrik van Biesten again lamented the passivity of those who had left the town of Hoorn after its invasion by rebel troops: '[They] arrived in Amsterdam with all they could carry with them and let the beggars break the town, without doing anything, as it has turned out to be.'[35] For secular clergy the decision to move was particularly sensitive, since the decrees of the Council of Trent had recently affirmed a strict duty of residence. It is illustrative that escaping priests often took great pains to justify their conduct. Several sources confirm that some of them were received rather coolly in Catholic towns such as Amsterdam.[36] In 1578 the provincial of the Society of Jesus was still of the opinion that his subordinates in the Netherlands should never leave their posts unless they were driven out by force or were given explicit orders from the government. After all, he reasoned, a voluntary migration of clerical leaders would only help the rebels to establish their alternative heretical order.[37]

Outside these ecclesiastical spheres, objections against migration were often made against the backdrop of political concerns. In the summer of 1572, quite a few royalist office-holders were uncertain whether they were allowed to leave areas that formally belonged to the king of Spain. Prior to their perilous journey from The Hague in July, members of the Court of Holland had asked the duke of Alba for permission to base themselves elsewhere.[38] The Habsburg administration in Brussels hesitantly permitted such a temporary move, but it was also aware that escaping magistrates damaged the royalist cause. Their flight exposed the breakdown of royal authority and provided the prince of Orange with a rationale to establish his own counter-administration.

For lay Catholics, who did not enjoy clerical benefices or political power, the dilemma of flight must have focused on different considerations. The majority of them simply could not afford to go into exile. From studies of religious migration elsewhere in early modern Europe it has become clear that the degree of one's financial independence, the possibilities of work elsewhere, and the extent of social networks largely

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[35] Van Biesten, 'Vervolg', 421, 440.
[36] *DWJ*, I, 370–1; Van Beuningen, *Wilhelmus Lindanus*, 398–89; Dusseldorpius, *Uittreksel*, 114.
[37] Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 13.
[38] Smit, *Den Haag*, 361; Smit, 'De omzetting', 192–3; Dusseldorpius, *Uittreksel*, 113, 131.

determined whether migration was a realistic option.[39] The Catholic émigré communities that developed after 1572 mostly consisted of male and female religious, royalist office-holders and urban citizens belonging to the middle class.[40] These were the groups whose members could call on alternative sources of patronage or income.

Apart from financial restrictions, the uncertain implications of living under rebel authority seem to have played a role in the decision whether to migrate. Despite distressing stories of violence against clerics, lay Catholics often felt no threat by staying in rebel territory. Some of them were even supporters of the recent uprising against Alba's tax laws and the presence of 'Spanish' troops. These citizens did not perceive the revolt primarily as a religious struggle, but rather regarded it as a political dispute over monarchical authority and local privileges. The Catholic element within the rebel movement eventually came to feel alienated from Orange and his clique, but it is important to realise that the Dutch revolt took its dominant Protestant, and specifically Calvinist, colouring only gradually. Jan Sweerts, for instance, lived in the village of Zevenbergen, which was regularly occupied by rebel troops in the 1570s. In 1573 he told royal officials that his life under rebel rule had never interfered with his loyalty to the Catholic Church and the king of Spain. A letter from a local priest served to confirm his allegiance.[41]

Finally, a considerable number of those who considered themselves Catholic appeared hesitant about exile because they actually agreed that some sort of change in their church was needed. The suspension of Catholic worship in 1573 met with little resistance because, among other reasons, many faithful were prepared to conform outwardly to Protestantism and even to accommodate elements of evangelical belief. In recent decades scholars have emphasised the malleable, fluid and shifting nature of religious identities in the sixteenth-century Low Countries.[42] Even Catholic priests were, in some cases, willing to adapt to the new circumstances. In some of Holland's towns and villages parish priests continued to preach in 1572, gradually adopting some form of protestantised worship. The notion of a unified, yet broadly conceived, *corpus christianum* was far more significant to them than disputes about specific doctrinal issues. If religious divisions could be fluid for priests, we may expect that this would also be so for laypersons. Although it is difficult to capture the exact mindset of individual 'protestantising Catholics', it is

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[39] Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 156–61.    [40] See Chapter 3.
[41] ARAB, Raad van Beroerten, 3, fo. 66–81, dossier Jan Sweerts, 1573. Compare Groenveld, 'Trouw en verraad'.
[42] Duke, *Reformation*; Pollmann, *Religious Choice*; Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*.

telling that more confessionalised Catholics were highly critical about the supposed passivity and weakness of groups in the religious middle.[43] Wouter Jacobsz, for example, was deeply shocked by accounts that priests in Holland had recently started businesses, married and occasionally preached in Protestant churches.[44]

### Vanished hopes

Despite the disturbing successes of the rebels in 1572, most Catholic refugees considered their exile to be temporary. They did not deem it necessary to sell their possessions when they left, and the majority of exiles based themselves in the nearest possible royalist town. Correspondence reveals expectations of a speedy return.[45] Like Wouter Jacobsz, the émigrés trusted that God would eventually restore the Catholic order and lawful Habsburg authority. They also had concrete indications that the military tide would eventually turn. After all, it was difficult to see how rebel troops could effectively resist the armies of the Spanish-Habsburg monarchy. But hopes for a smooth royal victory rapidly decreased in the course of 1576. In March, Alba's successor as royal governor, Don Luis de Requesens, died unexpectedly, creating a political vacuum for the Habsburg administration in Brussels that, catastrophically, coincided with financial problems besetting the Crown. In September 1575, Philip II declared that his government could no longer pay its creditors. Unpaid for months, the royal army in the Netherlands started to disintegrate. Large-scale mutinies followed in Brabant and Flanders in the summer and autumn of 1576. During the months of anarchy and confusion a temporary peace agreement was reached between rebel Holland and Zeeland and the other, loyalist provinces. This so-called Pacification of Ghent sought to end the war, drive out the plundering royal troops and allow refugees on both sides to return.[46]

Many in the Low Countries, including most Catholics, welcomed the Ghent treaty. Notably, it received the endorsement of several leading bishops.[47] Within the Catholic exile community, however, there could be heard more sceptical voices, which doubted the true intentions of the rebels and the legitimacy of the peace agreement. More specifically, these critics pointed out that the king had not signed the Ghent accord, that

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[43] Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 14.    [44] *DWJ*, I, 300; II, 669.
[45] In 1582, the Catholic nobleman Hans Roorda could still write optimistically that he expected Friesland would soon be brought back under 'His Majesty's obedience'. Quoted in Zijlstra, 'Studying Abroad', 299.
[46] For an overview of the course of events see Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 169–98.
[47] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 103–6.

Protestant worship would remain intact in Holland and Zeeland and that
displaced Catholics from those areas were allowed to return only if they
signed a loyalty oath to the local rebel regime. For many expelled magis-
trates this was too much to swallow. The Amsterdam parish priest Jacob
Buyck fulminated against what he called the evil 'Beggar peace'. In
December 1576 he warned his flock, among them many exiles, that
those who deemed it appropriate to celebrate the Pacification of Ghent
'would henceforth burn in hell unless they did penance.'[48]

The Ghent treaty was indeed an ambiguous accord. It reconciled the
rebels in Holland and Zeeland with the moderate political and religious
centre in the Habsburg provinces. From this perspective, the Pacification
in fact facilitated a broadening of the opposition against Philip II.
Crucially, the peace treaty had left the sensitive religious question unre-
solved. It only stated that religious persecutions would be suspended, in
anticipation of a final decision by the States General, the communal body
of all Netherlandish provinces. In practice, this gave the Protestant wing a
strong psychological boost. In the course of 1577, Calvinist-oriented
exiles started to return and organise themselves in Flemish and
Brabantine towns. Meanwhile local political coups further destabilised
royal authority in these traditional heartlands of the Low Countries.[49]

In places such as Antwerp, Bruges and Brussels town governments
initially sought to counter the growing tensions by organising public
processions, which ostentatiously expressed ideals of unbroken urban
unity. But in the course of 1578, local authorities felt compelled to experi-
ment with religious peace treaties, thus granting vocal Calvinist and
Lutheran minorities places of worship. These attempts to accommodate
dissent were simultaneously undermined by increasing religious radical-
ism on the ground. In Ghent in particular, a revolutionary political spirit
among the urban middle classes mixed with militant Calvinism. It grad-
ually became clear that Reformed Protestants were seeking to turn the city
into a kind of 'Calvinist republic'. This was followed by Ghent-backed
insurgencies in other Flemish towns. The political regimes of Antwerp
and Brussels became increasingly dominated by hard-line Calvinists,
too.[50] Philip II was not inclined to accept this violation of Catholic
monopoly: he supported the view of the new governor in the
Netherlands, Don Juan of Austria, who held that military action, rather

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[48] *DWJ*, II, 618–9.
[49] Overviews of these developments in Decavele, 'De mislukking'; Marnef, 'Brabants
calvinisme'; Van Peteghem, 'Vlaanderen'.
[50] Despretz, 'De instauratie', 119–229; Marnef, 'Brabants calvinisme'; Marnef, 'Het
protestantisme'; Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 253–8; Andriessen, 'De katholieken'.

than compromise, was needed to restore royal and Catholic authority. In May 1577, Don Juan seized the town of Namur. Assisted by fresh foreign troops, he subsequently defeated forces of the States General at Gembloux in early 1578.[51]

Radicalisation in both camps led to a polarised climate after 1577, splitting the Low Countries once more into rebel and royalist territory. But this time, the rebel areas did not merely consist of a handful of Holland and Zeeland towns, but now included most of the other provinces, including Flanders and Brabant. As a result, the new Catholic exodus that emerged after 1577–78 was larger in scale and more mixed in composition than it had been in 1572. Notably, it was fuelled by forced migrations of those whose loyalty to the rebellion was uncertain. The intensity and timing of these coerced expulsions differed, but it is possible to draw a general pattern. First, the mixed fortunes of the renewed war against Habsburg forces after 1577 led to an increasing connection between Catholicism and allegiance to the enemy. Don Juan's military successes provided hardliners in the rebel camp with the arguments to expel all those suspected of 'Spanish' sympathies. Thus, following the defeat at Gembloux, the 'Spanish-minded' Jesuits and Mendicants were forced to leave towns in Brabant and Flanders. Similarly, when Maastricht was taken by royal forces in 1579 and peace talks stalled in Cologne that same year, members of religious orders were driven out in large numbers across the rebel provinces.[52]

Second, expulsions of religious and Catholic citizens intensified as stories about treason spread among local communities. In Ghent, local chronicler Philip van Campene recorded in 1580 how a Catholic uprising had been prevented at the last minute. Several Catholic citizens were said to have exchanged code words and to have marked their houses with signs to communicate their allegiance to invading royal troops.[53] Such fears about conspiracies were not unjustified. In the previous year discontented Catholics in Bruges had attempted to seize power in the city. When rebel forces eventually succeeded in restoring order, suspected citizens and clergy were removed from Bruges by force.[54] In March 1580, George of Lalaing – count of Rennenberg and stadholder of the northern provinces – reconciled himself with the king, allowing royal troops to gain control over the town of Groningen. His transition triggered widespread expulsions of

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[51] Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 264–6; Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 175–8; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 105–13.
[52] Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, passim; Andriessen, 'De katholieken'.
[53] Van Campene, *Vlaemsche kronijk*, 262. See also Pollmann, *Catholic Identities*, 114–24.
[54] De Smet, 'Het dagelijks leven', 69–70; De Heere, 'Le manuel'; Bor, *Oorsprongk*, II, 75.

suspected Catholic loyalists elsewhere in the Low Countries. In Zwolle, for example, the Dominicans were driven out of the town and houses of prominent Catholics were plundered.[55]

To prevent further Catholic unrest, local authorities repeatedly required citizens and clergy to take a loyalty oath. These attempts to separate 'trustworthy' Catholics from 'unreliable' ones served as a third incentive for forced migration. Those who refused to declare their allegiance to Orange and the newly introduced religious settlements were expected to leave. Chronicles from Bruges, Ghent, Haarlem, Utrecht and Leeuwarden include lists of Catholic citizens, priest and nuns who were sent away by force in the years 1579–86.[56] Fourth, then, expulsions could be a means of purging society of Catholicism altogether. One of the first examples of such radical religious cleansing happened in Ghent, where attempts to establish a purely Calvinist society coincided with a propaganda campaign against remaining Catholic clergy. More specifically, the local authorities used a widely exploited case of sodomy among the Franciscans in the city and in nearby Bruges to justify the removal of all Mendicants in 1578. The sensational trial was followed by the ritual destruction of their convents. While Johan Decavele has shown that same-sex relationships among the monks were probably a reality, it is clear that the trial served the revolutionary regime very well. Stories of sodomy and purported sexual deviance were used to discredit the Catholic clergy in other towns, too. In Utrecht in June 1578, the forced migration of the Mendicants coincided with accusations of homosexual activity directed towards them.[57] In the Frisian town of Bolsward, the dissolution of a female convent followed rumours about the sexual misconduct of the nuns.[58] These different cases demonstrate how accusations of sexual deviance became a powerful tool of propaganda in the hands of radical Protestants. By associating Catholicism with sexual transgression, moral pollution and hence social disorder, Calvinists sought to undermine the credibility of the old religious order.

By the early 1580s it was clear that bi-confessional arrangements and official religious coexistence were untenable in rebel-controlled areas. In 1581, the States General formally banned all Catholic worship. But it was exactly this attempt to 'protestantise' the revolt that prompted many moderate Catholics to rethink its legitimacy. Indeed, the Catholic

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[55] Streng, *Stemme*, 324–5.

[56] Van Campene, *Vlaemsche kronijk*, 198–325; Weydts, *Chronique*, 4–41; Van Male, *De lamentatie*, 88–92; Verwer, *Memoriaelbouck*; Tresoar, Eysinga, 3370, Conscriptio Exulum; NA, Cousebant, 1098, List with names of expelled citizens from Utrecht.

[57] Decavele, 'Brugse and Gentse', 91; Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 252–6.

[58] Mol, 'De kloostergoederen', 92.

diaspora after 1577 was not only fuelled by the rebels' policies of forced migration, it also received impetus from common men and women who were increasingly willing to leave rebel territory voluntarily. To map this changing Catholic mindset in more detail, we need to shift our focus of attention to the writings of the refugees themselves.

### Embracing exile

In August 1580, Frans van den Bossche – member of the Norbertine abbey of Drongen near Ghent – wrote a letter of complaint to the Habsburg government about the prelate of his congregation. Van den Bossche pointed out that the prelate and several monks were still living in rebel Ghent, where they enjoyed a pension from the local Protestant government. By contrast, Van den Bossche and his fellow brothers had opted for exile, and were now suffering in poverty.[59] Around the same time a similar argument broke out among members of the illustrious abbey of St Michiels in Antwerp. While one group stressed the need for Catholics to move to royal Habsburg territory, another faction rejected exile and saw no harm in maintaining relations with the rebel authorities.[60] Such internal disputes show that by 1580 Catholic views about the revolt were shifting, as were, in consequence, perceptions of exile. Early examples of this evolving mindset may be found in the writings of Catholics who stayed in refugee centres. The same Hendrik van Biesten who had been critical about the flight of Catholics in 1566 expressed a very different view in a poem he composed sometime after 1572.[61] This time he glorified the role that Amsterdam had played as an asylum for Catholic refugees. 'Displaced priests have been received by her', Van Biesten noted with approval: 'Its gates have been opened early and late; to host the faithful.' Once sceptical about the allegiance of exiles, Van Biesten now predicted that Amsterdam would 'flourish with honour' just because it had turned itself into a bastion of embattled Catholics.[62]

Van Biesten's altered views illustrate a change of mentality that became conspicuous among Netherlandish Catholics in the early 1580s. As it became clear to them that the revolt would eventually destroy the Catholic order, exile was regarded more favourably. In 1580 Johannes

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[59] Valvekens, *De Zuid-Nederlandsche*, 146.
[60] ARAB, Audiëntie, 910, Reports St Michiels, fo. 2–20, 305–311.
[61] Published in Amsterdam in 1572 or 1573 by Willem Jacobsz. Reprinted in Teylingen, *Op-komste*, 219–28.
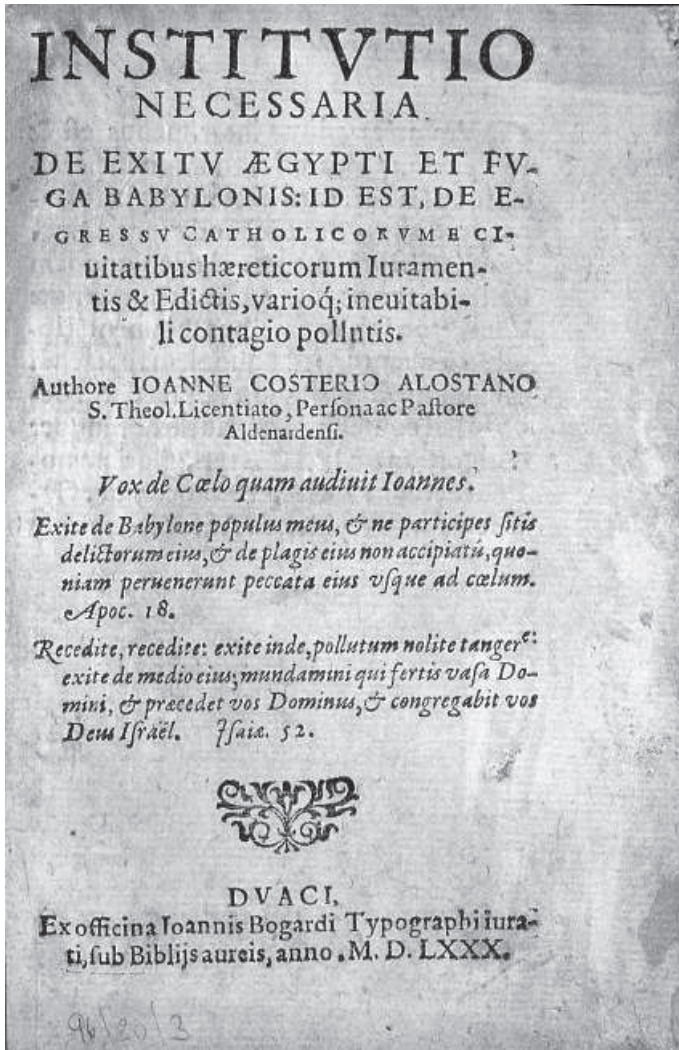[62] Van Biesten, 'Liedeken', 548–9.

INSTITVTIO
NECESSARIA.

DE EXITV ÆGYPTI ET FV_
GA BABYLONIS: ID EST, DE E-
GRESSV CATHOLICORVM E CI-
uitatibus hæreticorum Iuramen-
tis & Edictis, varioq; ineuitabi-
li contagio pollutis.

Authore IOANNE COSTERIO ALOSTANO
S. Theol. Licentiato, Persona ac Pastore
Aldenardensi.

*Vox de Cælo quam audiuit Ioannes.*

*Exite de Babylone populus meus, & ne participes sitis
delictorum eius, & de plagis eius non accipiatis, quo-
niam peruenerunt peccata eius vsque ad cælum.
Apoc. 18.*

*Recedite, recedite: exite inde, pollutum nolite tangere:
exite de medio eius; mundamini qui fertis vasa Do-
mini, & præcedet vos Dominus, & congregabit vos
Deus Israël. Isaie 52.*

DVACI,
Ex officina Ioannis Bogardi Typographi iura-
ti, sub Biblijs aureis, anno .M.D.LXXX.

Figure 5  Title page of Johannes Costerius, *Institutio Necessaria*, 1580.
Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden.

Costerius, a priest from the Flemish town of Oudenaarde who had taken
refuge in Douai, published a booklet, the *Institutio Necessaria* [Fig. 5].

He meticulously countered the arguments against flight that had been
circulating in the Catholic community, and instead advocated exile as an
admirable strategy whereby committed Catholics could show their true

allegiance to the Church of Rome and to the king of Spain.[63] Similarly, other prominent refugees, including the bishops Willem Lindanus, Johannes Strijen and Cunerus Petri put forth arguments that presented migration as a respectable option.[64] It was not just the polarisation of the Dutch revolt that triggered this new rhetoric, the changing perception of exile was equally informed by the militant spirit of international Catholicism that became conspicuous around 1580. As we will see in Chapters 4 and 5, especially in Catholic asylum centres such as Cologne and Douai, where Netherlandish exiles interacted with English counterparts and had access to cutting-edge Tridentine media, a new Catholic discourse emerged. Five recurring arguments became especially fashionable among these pioneering defenders of Catholic exile.

First, it is clear that the increasing radicalism of Calvinist regimes in Brabantine and Flemish towns convinced hesitant Catholics that flight was necessary to ensure salvation. For example, in 1581 authorities in Antwerp and Brussels compelled members of religious orders to attend Reformed services, and forced them to wear common clothes and to alter their hairstyles.[65] In Flanders mock processions were organised, during which objects most sacred to Catholics, such as the Eucharist and the holy water, were ostentatiously offered to animals or thrown out onto the street.[66] Local chroniclers, such as Willem Weydts in Bruges and Jan de Pottre in Brussels, wrote with outrage about these humiliating displays, and noted how they triggered an exodus of committed Catholic citizens.[67] Gislain Bulteel in Ypres was among them. 'Immediately you can see', he later wrote in a poem, 'anyone who supported God and King Philip out of love of religion leave on their own account.'[68] Even in less polarised areas, such as Friesland, several Catholics now indicated that they preferred 'a voluntary exile' to living 'under the tyranny of rebels and heretics'.[69]

These traditional Catholics were not just appalled by the gradual demolition of their sacred world, they had also been provided with alternative options in recent publications. For example, the above-mentioned booklet of Johannes Costerius sought to persuade Catholics in rebel towns that

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[63] Costerius, *Institutio*. On Costerius, see Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen', 16, 30.
[64] Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*; Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen'.
[65] Knuttel, *De toestand*, I, 3; Schoutens, *Geschiedenis*, 85; De Pottre, *Dagboek*, 91; Van Bruaene, 'A Breakdown'.
[66] Weydts, *Chronique*, 14, 31–2; Verberckmoes, *Schertsen*, 156–7, 172.
[67] Weydts, *Chronique*, 40–1; De Pottre, *Dagboek*, 94–6, 106–8, 113; De Smet, 'Het dagelijks leven', 69–74; Van Male, *De lamentatie*, 12–7, 88–92.
[68] Bakelants, *La vie*, 470.
[69] Tresoar, Eysinga, 2968, Letter of Frisian exiles, undated, 1582–83.

exile was the only strategy that could save their soul. Even the most steadfast believers, Costerius argued, could not do without regular access to the sacraments and the spiritual guidance of priests.[70] The author, who wrote his treatise while in exile in Douai, must have been inspired by the strikingly similar arguments in recent publications by English exiled Catholics. For example, traces of Costerius' narrative can also be found in the *Apologie* published in Reims in 1581 by the expatriate English cleric William Allen. He likewise pointed out that migration from Protestant rule was a necessary condition if English Catholics were to preserve their spiritual wellbeing.[71] While scholarship has tended to study the publications of Allen and other English exiles as responses to specific English concerns, it is clear that the construction of a new interpretive framework of exile was in fact a transnational process, in which Catholic refugees from England, Scotland, Ireland and the Low Countries interacted with, and continuously inspired, each other.[72]

Those who started to promote exile in the early 1580s exploited a second, related argument. The rebellion against Habsburg rule had not just deprived individual Catholics of their religious essentials, they asserted, but had also 'polluted' and 'poisoned' the *corpus christianum* as a whole. The notion of religious dissent as an infection of the body social was, as we have seen, a commonplace in sixteenth-century Europe.[73] The Jesuit Peter Canisius urged his relatives in Nijmegen in 1580 to stay loyal to their faith by avoiding any physical contact with heretics: if social isolation turned out to be impossible, they had better leave town.[74] A similar metaphor was used by Jacob Buyck, parish priest of the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam, who had moved to Emmerich after the invasion of rebel troops in 1578. 'From a pure virgin', his native city had now turned into 'a filthy and tainted girl.'[75] Conversely, the connection between religious dissent, sexual chastity and physical health could be used to praise Catholic asylum centres. Van Biesten claimed that by resisting rebel pressure and accommodating refugees Amsterdam had initially remained 'unspoiled'.[76] These examples remind us that rhetorical strategies on both sides could be surprisingly similar. While Calvinists had used accusations of sodomy to forge a natural link between Catholicism, sexual deviance and social disorder, Catholic authors employed sexual metaphors to a similar end.

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[70] Costerius, *Institutio*, ch. 1.   [71] Discussed in Highley, *Catholics*, 33–4.
[72] Compare Clancy, *Papist Pamphleteers*; Holmes, *Resistance*; Highley, *Catholics*. See Chapter 5.
[73] Davis, 'The Sacred'.   [74] Canisius, *Beati Petri Canisii*, VII, 562–8; VIII, 97–101, 160.
[75] Alberdingk Thijm, 'Pastoor Buyck's treurzang', 48.   [76] Van Biesten, 'Liedeken', 548.

The accuracy of such views could be advanced by pointing to well-known precedents, a third strategy employed by supporters of Catholic exile. Obvious biblical role models included Abraham and the exiled Israelites. Johannes Costerius frequently used their example to convince refugees they were on the right track. He also countered opposing dogmatic views that regarded flight as less heroic than martyrdom, such as the tale of the early Christian author Cyprian. These examples were aptly reinterpreted by Costerius, or declared unfit as a frame of reference for the current situation in the Netherlands.[77] In his *Schildt der Catholijcken* (1591), a popular manual for Catholics in dangerous times, the prolific Jesuit Frans Coster employed the power of precedents as well. Coster explained that the harassment and expulsion of Catholics was in fact an old strategy of heretics. He presented the current Catholic diasporas as mere repetitions of similar events under Arian and Waldensian tyranny.[78] In this context, it could be particularly clarifying to point to England. Johannes Costerius compared the situation in Elizabethan dominions and the Low Countries to show Netherlandish Catholics the terrifying fate that Protestant rule would eventually bring. In addition, he stressed that the presence of English exiles in the Low Countries since the early 1560s proved that fleeing was 'neither wrong nor new' for Catholics.[79]

A fourth recurring argument suggested that staying in rebel territory implied that one accepted the legitimacy of rebel rule. In 1578 Pope Gregory XIII formally threatened Catholics who collaborated with the rebel administration with excommunication. In this way he confronted them with a dilemma that English and Irish Catholics had faced since the papal bull *Regnans in Excelsis* (1570), in which his predecessor Pius V had declared Queen Elizabeth a heretic and had absolved her subjects from allegiance to her.[80] As we have seen, questions about political loyalty had already worried Catholics in rebel Holland and Zeeland in 1572. Yet the issue of personal allegiance to the monarchy became especially sensitive in 1581, when the States General formally abjured King Philip II. Office-holders, and in some cases members of religious orders and common citizens, were now required to swear a new oath of loyalty to a self-styled political order.

Although scholars have pointed out that the abandonment of Philip II merely confirmed the status quo, there is little doubt that the modified

[77] Costerius, *Institutio*, 11–16.
[78] Coster, *Schildt*, 19. Similar arguments had been used by William Allen. See Alford, *Burghley*, 242.
[79] Costerius, *Institutio*, 16.        [80] Brom, 'Stukken', 429–39.

oath formula of 1581 provoked resistance.[81] Even those who had been supporting the rebellion were divided about its legitimacy. In Haarlem in October 1581 the town's tax gatherer Pieter van Drijl was fired because he refused to take the oath.[82] The magistrate of Antwerp sought to enforce obedience by threatening hesitant citizens with the penalty of exile.[83] A number of Antwerp citizens indeed decided to leave the city in the course of 1581–82. In Bruges Willem Weydts recorded how turmoil had broken out after the local government had compelled its officials to abjure the king of Spain. One of them, Jan Spestael, declared he 'would rather leave the town, than to take such an oath.' Spestael was expelled with other nonconformists.[84] In the meantime, the newly appointed Habsburg governor Alexander Farnese was keen to kindle these internal disputes by inviting hesitant office-holders to take seats in his royalist administration in exile.[85] Going into exile, once seen as an act of cowardice against the lawful Habsburg regime, thus became a means by which committed Catholics could assert their allegiance to the king.

The growing respectability of exile was further enhanced by social sentiments. Calvinist attempts to redefine the urban social fabric had shocked traditional Catholics; the appointment of *homines novi* to public office made things even worse. The Dutch revolt has long been viewed by historians as a movement that fostered the rise of middle-class *burghers* to political power in the Netherlands. Local studies have shown that the degree of political renewal actually varied from place to place and that rebel officials were generally recruited from traditional magistrate families.[86] Still, opponents of the revolt in the 1570s and 1580s were eager to stress the suspicious 'novelty' of the rebel regime and the incompetence of its inexperienced office-holders. Since religious heresy was traditionally linked to notions of social disorder, the Protestant administration was frequently accused of blurring social distinctions. Wouter Jacobsz wrote with dismay about the dubious social profile of some new Leiden magistrates, and typically likened rebel society to that of Sodom and Gomorrah.[87] To local chronicler Zeghere van Male it was clear that the

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[81] Arnade, *Beggars*, 309; Mout, *Plakkaat*, 47–9.  [82] Verwer, *Memoriaelbouck*, 221.
[83] Brandt, *Historie*, I, 687; Andriessen, 'De katholieken', 67–70.
[84] Weydts, *Chronique*, 41–2.
[85] Van Campene, *Vlaemsche kronijk*, 246; *BN*, XVI, 527; Aerts, 'Spanje', 16–36; De Schepper, 'Brabant', 120–5.
[86] Compare Marnef, 'Brabants calvinisme', 12–14; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 157–9; Hibben, *Gouda*, 53–93; Lamet, 'The Vroedschap', 13–42; Van Nierop, *The Nobility*, 181–5, 193–5.
[87] *DWJ*, I, 47, 339; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 27. See also De Pottre, *Dagboek*, 112, 128; Weydts, *Chronique*, 44.

recent economic decline of Bruges was directly linked to the arrival of a heretical and socially inferior regime.[88] It was not just the changing confessional colouring of the public church, but also the social transformation of the urban community that came with it, that made traditional Catholics anxious about the credibility of the new order.

In this polarising climate, committed Catholics finally developed a fifth argument in which the experience of exile was presented as a blessing in disguise. English exiles in Douai and Leuven seem to have been to first to proffer this reading. In his *Consolatorie Epistle to the Afflicted Catholikes* (Leuven, 1580), exiled priest Thomas Hide pointed out that 'the godly christian cannot be banished from Christ wherever he be, in Christ there is no banishment, and without Christ al is banishment.'[89] In the same year, Johannes Costerius' *Institutio* declared that displacement was, in fact, a liberation. He knew from his experience in Douai that exiled Catholics were generally happy to have left 'spiritual slavery'.[90] While the exile manual of Costerius thus stressed the 'purifying' effects of displacement, Peter Canisius similarly interpreted exile as an honourable punishment. After all, he argued, history has shown that God seeks to test his chosen people.[91] Canisius' view of exile as an assessment of faith, and hence an act of obedience to God, was remarkably close to what John Calvin and other Protestant reformers had been arguing in previous decades.[92] This parallel may have been part of a deliberate rhetorical strategy. Catholic polemicists with Jesuit links, including Jan David, Frans Coster and Johannes Costerius, skilfully appropriated well-known Protestant narratives in an attempt to shape contrasting, self-conscious Catholic identities. This technique of reversal might also explain the title of Costerius' book, *Institutio Necessaria*, which echoed those of several Protestant reformers' works, notably Calvin's *Institutes*. Whereas the latter had styled Protestant exile as a variant of the experience of the chosen people of Israel, the former transformed this imagery by using the 'exitu[s] aegypti et fuga babylonis' as a model for displaced Catholics [Fig. 5].[93]

How very effective this strategy was becomes clear in the writing of the refugees themselves. 'Do not grieve about exile, [or] the loss of office or wealth', Jacob Buyck reminded himself in a poem of around 1580, 'because Christ will be my reward.'[94] Biblical blueprints that had formerly been used by Protestants now became popular in Catholic

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[88] Van Male, *De lamentatie*, esp. 42–60     [89] Quoted in Highley, *Catholics*, 31.
[90] Costerius, *Institutio*, 23.
[91] Canisius, *Beati Petri Canisii*, VIII, 99–100. See also Coster, *Seven meditatien*, 38, 41.
[92] Gordon, *Calvin*, 42–4.     [93] Costerius, *Institutio*, title page; Gordon, *Calvin*, 57–8.
[94] De Bont, 'Meester Jacob Buyck', 48. A similar example in Isselt, *Sui temporis historia*, 648.

émigré communities. The author of a manuscript on Catholic refugees from Friesland, entitled *Conscriptio Exulum* (1584), was keen to compare Frisian Catholics in exile with those who had been 'with Abraham living in strange countries'.[95] Wouter Jacobsz noted in his diary how he felt 'strengthened by the miraculous liberation of Israel's children, of whom we were mindful'.[96] Within a month of his expulsion, the same Jacob Buyck bought a book evoking the biblical flight of Daniel 'to soften the great distresses of my sad life'.[97] In an attempt to make better sense of their experiences, exiles composed 'personal' narratives that employed semantic schemes from popular treatises. In the *Fondatieboeck* of the Poor Clares from Antwerp, the experiences of the nuns in the 1580s were aptly modelled after biblical stories such as Joseph and Mary's search for an inn at Bethlehem. In addition, the author suitably recorded several spectacular miracles encountered by the nuns on their dangerous journey to Trier. All of this was proof that God had preserved his elect children.[98] In such ways individual Catholic refugees reinvented themselves as the re-enactors of a proud Catholic tradition.

### Numbers

Both the forced expulsions and the gradual shift in mentality within the Catholic community itself contributed to the growing number of exiles in the early 1580s. Still, it is difficult to quantify their numbers exactly. Refugees were not systematically registered and many records listing expelled Catholics have been lost. The few surviving sources are problematic too. Some contemporary authors seem to have exaggerated, or downplayed, the scale of the Catholic diaspora. This is not a problem specific to Catholic migration in the Dutch revolt. A number of scholars have recently challenged the effectiveness of any attempt to 'count' migrants in a sixteenth-century context.[99] It is also illustrative that figures for the Catholic exile community from Elizabethan England differ widely.[100] For the situation in the Low Countries, the chaotic circumstances of the war create an additional difficulty for historians in

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[95] Tresoar, Eysinga, 3370, Conscriptio Exulum.     [96] *DWJ*, I, 161.

[97] It concerned a copy of Jacobus Veldius, *Daniel Propheta commentariis pro concione explicatus* (Antwerp, 1576). Buyck wrote the following poem on the title page: 'Bis septem stuferis exsul me Clivica in urbe / Emit, cui nomen principis Vrna dedit. Scilicet ut tristi lenirem in commoda vitae, / Et patriae fleret cum Daniele vires'. UBA, Collectie Buyck, sign. 273 G 20.

[98] Schoutens, *Geschiedenis*, 66–80, 90–104.

[99] Schunka, 'Konfession', 40–1; Jürgens and Weller, 'Einleitung', 1–12.

[100] Guilday, *The English Catholic Refugees*, xx; Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*, 16; Marshall, 'Religious Exiles', 268–9.

search of quantitative evidence. Many refugees were itinerant, constantly relocating whenever food became sparse or enemy forces appeared. Gislain Bulteel from Ypres recorded how he and others had been 'driven out of their hometown, wandering through fields in exile, suffering from the cold and much hardship'.[101] The many travels of Gerrit Scarp from The Hague are another case in point. He escaped to Utrecht in December 1572, but decided to move on to Amsterdam the following year. In September 1573 he felt compelled to leave his asylum again, 'since he had no money [left]'. Wouter Jacobsz recorded in his diary that Gerrit asked him 'if I didn't know any friends, who might be willing to give him a loan'. Wouter suggested he try his luck in Cologne as many others had, 'and see if he might find some sort of position there.'[102]

If precisely quantifying Catholic migration is impossible, we can still draw together the available sources. Some records from Holland suggest that 4,000 people left The Hague alone in 1572, but this group included anybody who sought to escape the violence.[103] The earlier mentioned *Conscriptio Exulum* lists 626 Catholic exiles from Friesland around 1584, but most historians regard this number as a low estimate since the document refers only to priests and office-holders.[104] A local chronicler from Bruges records 131 names of mostly prominent, expelled Catholics, but he didn't include their families or entourage.[105] Lists of about 60 expelled citizens from Utrecht in 1586 pose a similar problem.[106] For Antwerp, sources state that no fewer than 8,000 Catholics (of a total population of about 85,000) left the city during the Calvinist regime.[107] This would mean that at the height of the Catholic refugee crisis, around 1582, at least 10,000 to 15,000 men and women must have lived in exile. In any case, it is clear that forced migration and (temporary) flight affected thousands of Catholics in the Low Countries at some stage during the 1570s and 1580s.[108] More important than an assessment of their exact numbers is perhaps a closer examination of the exile community's social profile and

[101] Bakelants, *La vie*, 470.     [102] *DWJ*, I, 302.

[103] Dusseldorpius, *Uittreksel*, 115; Smit, 'De omzetting', 199; Wijsenbeek, 'Verhuizen', 159–74.

[104] Compare Hoogland, 'De Friesche vlugtelingen'; Lambooij, *Sibrandus Leo*, 26; Woltjer, *Friesland*, 311.

[105] Van Male, *De lamentatie*, 88–92.

[106] NA, Cousebant, 1098, Lists of expelled Catholics, 1580s. Compare Kaplan, *Calvinists*, 166–7.

[107] *Correspondance du Cardinal de Granvelle*, IV, 569–72; Briels, *De Zuidnederlandse*, 10.

[108] Van Nierop, *Treason*, 165–85; Donnet, *Les exilés*; Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen', 5–37; Rooze-Stouthamer, *De opmaat*, 145–6.

the material circumstances in asylum towns. As we will see, both factors shaped and conditioned the responses that exile eventually provoked. The anatomy of this process will become evident in Part 2, which seeks to assess the living conditions in the large Catholic asylum centres of the 1570s and 1580s.

*Part 2*

Exile

# 3    Conditions of displacement

## A European diaspora

On 26 November 1573 the diarist Wouter Jacobsz recorded that a woman had fallen from a bridge in Amsterdam. It was not an accident. The victim was said to have thrown herself into the icy water in despair. 'If nobody wants to help [me],' she had declared, she had no other choice than 'to help herself'.[1] Although suicide was a considerable taboo in sixteenth-century society, the anecdote of the unfortunate woman was mentioned only in passing in Wouter's diary. Both the event and its casual coverage exemplify the extreme circumstances in Amsterdam in the 1570s. One of the few Holland towns that resisted rebel pressure, Amsterdam was a besieged bastion of Catholic loyalists between 1572 and 1578. Surviving accounts provide a chilling record of the living conditions in the over-crowded enclave. For the years 1572–75 deaths through malnutrition and cold are frequently mentioned in the city records. Homelessness was widespread.[2] If Catholic refugees had fled their homes in the hope of finding personal safety and religious purity in Amsterdam, they soon discovered that these came at a high price.

For all its compelling drama, Amsterdam in the 1570s was not representative of the Catholic exile experience during the Dutch revolt. Like all religious migrations in Reformation Europe, the Catholic exodus in the Low Countries changed significantly in size and composition over time. At its height, around 1582, it had grown into a diaspora spreading itself across western Europe. Three main phases can be distinguished. In the years 1572–76 most refugees migrated from the core areas of rebellion in Holland and Zeeland. Escaping Catholics in this period tended to settle in nearby royalist safe havens including Amsterdam and Utrecht. Further south, Antwerp, Bruges, Mechelen and Leuven

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[1] *DWJ*, I, 343.
[2] SAA, Burgemeesters, Stadsrekeningen, 40, 41, 42, 43, Vroedschap, Resoluties, 2 (scan 258). A compelling account of Amsterdam in the 1570s is offered by Van Nierop, *Treason*.

were important gathering places for exiled royal office-holders and Catholic religious.[3] But as the revolt spread after 1577, its refugee hubs moved as well. In this second phase of Catholic migration, from 1577 to 1585, centres of asylum were typically located at the fringes of Habsburg authority. Groningen, for example, turned into a large but isolated stronghold for Frisian royalists in the 1580s.[4] Further away, the German towns of Koblenz, Mainz, Münster and Trier housed a growing population of expelled Catholic religious after 1578. Above all, it was Cologne that served as the epicentre for these various groups of refugees. Liège, Douai and St Omer were the main hubs of asylum in the south. In northern France, Reims, Amiens, Rouen and the lands of the duke of Guise accommodated Netherlandish émigrés, often from the Walloon borderlands.[5]

   Some refugees went even further south. The exiled Antwerp dean Jan Balen, for example, travelled with a royal army all the way to Spain and from there to Naples and eventually Rome, where a small Netherlandish exile community seems to have emerged in the early 1580s.[6] In Madrid, the Flemish guard of Philip II incorporated a number of Catholics with refugee backgrounds.[7] The Habsburg government had initially been slow to respond to the emerging refugee crisis in the Netherlands, but after 1579 Philip II became more engaged with the problem. He received representatives of the émigré community at his court and showed his compassion by distributing pensions. In 1582, the king arranged for housing in Lisbon for the exiled Sisters of St Clare from Holland.[8] Religious institutions in France, Spain and Italy did their bit too. The famous abbeys of Cîteaux and Montecassino for example, accommodated dislocated members of their respective congregations from the Netherlands.[9] In October 1583, Bishop Remigius Driutius of Bruges, himself in exile in Tournai, found that the religious community of the Benedictine abbey of Oudenburg near Ostend had completely dispersed. The list of destinations he drew up was revealing: from nearby Kortrijk, Oudenaarde and Hesdin in Walloon Flanders, to monastic foundations in

[3] Andriessen, 'De katholieken', 72 n.3; Schoutens, *Geschiedenis*, 52; Prims, *Geschiedenis*, VIII-3, 250–3; Rooze-Stouthamer, *De opmaat*, 145–6.
[4] Bergsma, *Tussen gideonsbende*, 445–7; Hoogland, 'De Friesche vlugtelingen'; Schroor and Knottnerus, 'De opstand', 126–45.
[5] Carroll, *Martyrs*, 242–55; Schoutens, *Geschiedenis*; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*; Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen'.
[6] ARAB, Audiëntie, 912, fo. 130, Reports St Michiels, Antwerp, 1585.
[7] NA, Heereman, 661, Papers Frederik de Wael van Vronesteyn, 1579.
[8] Schoutens, *Geschiedenis*, 78–9.
[9] ARAB, Audiëntie, 910, fo. 52 and further, Reports St Pieters, Ghent, 1581.

Padua, Mantua and Seville.[10] By 1585, ecclesiastical institutions in western and southern Europe had become familiar with the phenomenon of Catholic refugees from the Low Countries.

Over the course of the 1580s, Habsburg forces under Alexander Farnese succeeded in recapturing large parts of the southern and eastern provinces of the Netherlands [Map 2]. As rebellious territory became confined to the north and the west, the characteristics of Catholic migration changed again. In this third phase, roughly between the taking of Antwerp by Farnese's armies (1585) and the start of the Twelve Years' Truce (1609), many Catholic refugees were able to return to their former dwellings, notably in Brabant and Flanders. Small groups of Catholics in the northern, Protestant provinces similarly decided to move to the recaptured southern, Catholic Netherlands.[11] Coerced migrations to Habsburg-controlled territories could be observed in towns taken by rebel forces, such as Breda in 1590 and Groningen in 1594. Such piecemeal, north–south migrations were dwarfed, however, by a countervailing movement of men and women from the recaptured Catholic south to the officially Protestant north. Estimates suggest that about 80,000 to 100,000 'southerners' moved to the emerging Dutch Republic after 1585, while only a few hundred seem to have made the journey in the opposite direction.[12] As we will see, this gradual decrease in Catholic refugees can be attributed to both the improved living conditions for Catholics in the Dutch Republic and the challenging economic conditions in the Habsburg south.[13] Hence by the early 1600s, Catholic migration in the Low Countries had changed its complexion.

### Profiles and destinations

Although comprehensive registers of refugees have not survived, it appears that Catholic refugees consisted of three broadly defined groups: male and female religious, Habsburg office-holders, and urban citizens. It is clear, then, that the majority of Catholic exiles were members of the upper and middle strata of society – or were those dependent on them through parentage and clientage. Hence they differed in some respects from their Protestant counterparts. Studies of Calvinism in sixteenth-century Europe have highlighted the prominence of urban, educated

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[10] ARAB, Audiëntie, 911, fo. 111 and further, Reports St Pieters, Oudenburg, 1583. See also Viaene, 'De abdij van Oudenburg', 121–4.

[11] Arblaster, 'Southern Netherlands', 123–38. See also Chapter 7.

[12] Briels, *De Zuidnederlandse*; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 328–32; Janssens, 'Verjaagd', 115–9; Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 253–7; Rogier, 'Over karakter', 47–53.

[13] See Chapter 7.

'middle-class' citizens in Reformed exile communities, but have also pointed to the presence of artisans, weavers and shopkeepers.[14] Catholic and Protestant refugees from the Low Countries may generally have shared an urban background and in some cases a similar socio-economic profile, but they tended to represent different sections of their town community.

In a society in which prospects of work and material support largely depended on personal networks and reputation, a migrant's choice of settlement was rarely random.[15] Indeed, the social composition of the Catholic émigré communities often corresponded to the specific characteristics of the host towns. During the second phase of the Catholic exodus, for example, Douai developed into the preeminent gathering place for the expelled political and ecclesiastical establishment from Flanders. Close to the French borders, Douai had been the site of a new Catholic university and was home to a considerable English and Scottish exile community. These characteristics made it an obvious destination for educated Catholics from Protestant territory and a suitable seat for the royalist contingent of the Council of Flanders.[16] Nearby, St Omer similarly developed into a cosmopolitan community of English and Netherlandish clerics, who received support from the local bishop.[17] In Groningen, by contrast, the émigré community was largely geographically defined. From 1580 it served as the headquarters of almost the entire political and clerical elite of the nearby province of Friesland.[18] Likewise, during the years 1572–76, the archiepiscopal city of Utrecht was the base for exiled political institutions from Holland, including the Court of Holland from The Hague. Several smaller towns developed a distinctive character because they accommodated high-profile Catholics from a particular area. Kalkar in Cleves, for example, gained a reputation after 1578 for its concentration of magistrates who had been driven from Amsterdam.[19]

[14] Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 157–60; Grell, *Brethren*; Schilling, *Niederländische Exulanten*; Pettegree, *Emden*; Esser, *Niederländische Exulanten*. Compare Guilday, *The English Catholic Refugees*, xix.

[15] Moch, *Moving Europeans*, 6–18; Obdeijn and Schrover, *Komen en gaan*, 26–38; Lottum, *Across the North Sea*, 24–53.

[16] Foppens, *Histoire*; Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen'; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 115–42.

[17] Hirschauer, 'Les troubles', 45–60; De Smet, 'Het dagelijks leven', 74; Schoutens, *Geschiedenis*, 86; Valvekens, *De Zuid-Nederlandsche*, 125, 147.

[18] Bergsma, *Tussen gideonsbende*, 445–8; Hogeman, 'Over de verbanning', 323–71; Hoogland, 'De Friesche vlugtelingen'; Schroor and Knottnerus, 'De Opstand', 126–40.

[19] De Werd, *St Nicolaikirche*, 25–7; De Bont, 'Delftsche vluchtelingen', 304–7; Dudok van Heel, 'Waar waren', 13–24; De Bont, *Genealogische*.

Not all asylum towns had such a specific profile. Cologne, notably, accommodated a large expatriate community that was socially and geographically mixed, though in this case the city's diverse functions account for this varied composition. Strategically located on the Rhine, the imperial free city had long-established commercial connections with the Low Countries. Its mercantile and banking facilities made Cologne the preferred destination for internationally oriented entrepreneurs, particularly Catholic merchant families from Antwerp in the early 1580s. Because they could build on existing trading networks and were not bound by local guild restrictions, these merchants were able to continue to do business in Cologne.[20] The city's rich ecclesiastical infrastructure, which included the seat of the prince-elector archbishop and the papal nuncio, made it a hub for prominent clerics. Many expelled bishops, among them Willem Lindanus (Roermond), Johannes Strijen (Middelburg), Laurentius Mets ('s-Hertogenbosch) and Cunerus Petri (Leeuwarden), spent time in exile in what was commonly known as the 'holy city'. They were accompanied by numerous displaced members of illustrious abbeys from Brabant, Flanders, Holland and elsewhere. Finally, Cologne was known as a centre of education. The seat of an old university, a large Jesuit college and a productive Catholic printing press, the city quickly developed into the intellectual powerhouse of the Netherlandish exile community. Incorporating these various functions, Cologne also forged new bonds among Catholic elites from different parts of the Low Countries.[21]

Interestingly, foreign Catholic strongholds such as Cologne, Paris or even Rome were not universally regarded as respectable places for exiled Catholics. Cologne may have been a bastion of the Tridentine movement in northern Europe, but it was also a cosmopolitan trade centre that was home to a variety of religious subcultures, among them an underground Protestant exile community.[22] The city's relationship with its archbishop was complicated. What is more, over the course of the revolt some Habsburg officials argued that Catholic refugees should move to reconciled royal territory rather than stay in foreign safe havens. When in 1582 a new prelate had to be appointed for the dispersed Norbertine congregation of St Michiels in Antwerp, one of the candidates was criticised for his previous flight to Cologne, 'being neutral and outside the obedience of his

[20] Donnet, *Les exilés*, 288–355; Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen'. Compare Johnson, *Magistrates*, 72–3; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 156–61.
[21] Donnet, *Les exilés*; Van Roosbroeck, *Emigranten*, 135–50; Timmermans, *Patronen*, 47–51; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 1–113.
[22] Heal, *The Cult*, 18–9, 207–61; Schilling, *Niederländische Exulanten*; Van Roosbroeck, *Emigranten*, 135–50.

Majesty'.[23] By contrast, a colleague from the Cistercian abbey of Ter Duinen near Ostend received praise in 1581 for encouraging his brethren to move to St Omer: a town with immaculate Catholic credentials, fittingly located in reconciled royal territory.[24] Political office-holders received similar advice in January 1580 when Alexander Farnese proclaimed that members of the Council of Flanders could retain their royal appointment only if they based themselves in royalist Douai.[25] If the place of exile could be a sensitive issue, so too was the timing of one's flight. From the late 1570s, the Farnese government kept a note of when magistrates and religious had left rebel territory. After the Habsburg *reconquista* of the 1580s, it became clear that a late departure from Calvinist towns could frustrate a magistrate's re-appointment to royal office.[26]

### Life in exile

Dislocation, whether accepted voluntarily or coerced, had profound legal, economic and social consequences in sixteenth-century society. Exile generally meant the loss of housing, income, contacts and reputation. As a rule, immigrants lacked citizenship and hence could not become members of local guilds or representative political bodies. For privileged Catholic elites the experience of social exclusion was deeply traumatic. What is more, in a society in which much of an individual's sense of belonging and identity was inextricably bound up with locality, 'exile' effectively turned respectable citizens into unknown strangers.[27] 'The good Catholics', as Wouter Jacobsz liked to call them, 'see clearly that they are little different from fugitives, banished from their towns, as if they were criminals.'[28] The extent to which refugees were able to cope with these challenges depended on their financial and social capital as well as the support facilities in asylum towns. Let us therefore compare three key centres of Catholic refuge: Amsterdam, Cologne and Douai. All accommodated large numbers of Catholic exiles, but each did so under very different circumstances. How far, then, did the specific characteristics of each of these host towns shape the experience of exile?

[23] ARAB, Audiëntie, 910, fo. 305 and further, Reports St Michiels, Antwerp, 1582.
[24] ARAB, Audiëntie, 910, fo. 141 and further, Reports Ter Duinen, 1581.
[25] Van Campene, *Vlaemsche kronijk*, 246; *BN*, XVI, 527.    [26] See Chapter 6.
[27] Greengrass, *Longman Companion*, 171; Van Nierop, *Treason*, 180–3; Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*.
[28] *DWJ*, I, 158–59.

## Immigration policies

What all these places had in common was an ambivalent attitude towards immigrants. This was not specific to the Netherlands or indeed the Dutch revolt. Despite a widely exploited ideal of Christian hospitality, sixteenth-century communities were not well equipped to accommodate refugees. Within the context of a close-knit *corpus christianum*, newcomers presented a threat to the established social infrastructure of towns. Strangers arriving in large numbers also put immediate pressure on housing markets and food supplies. Immigration was therefore commonly associated with social disorder. In war-ridden areas like Amsterdam, refugees also posed a security risk: trustworthy and financially independent asylum seekers could not easily be distinguished from less reputable newcomers, or even returning Protestant exiles in disguise.[29] In Amsterdam strict immigration rules were therefore imposed in 1572. To prevent any suspicious person from entering the town, the magistrates were personally involved in the registration of refugees and the administering of oaths.[30] Landlords had to provide the authorities with detailed lists of their tenants. Similar measures were taken in nearby Utrecht, where in August 1572 the authorities declared that only strangers who provided a 'satisfactory certificate regarding their lives and reputation' would be allowed to enter the town.[31] In Middelburg incoming and outgoing country folk were required to wear a badge showing a red Burgundian cross. To demonstrate their loyalty to the Habsburg monarchy, men had to wear the sign on their right breast, women on their left.[32]

Across the border, Cologne's city fathers could afford to experiment with more-flexible immigration policies. Economic opportunity seems to have guided their attitude towards refugees from the Low Countries. In the 1550s and 1560s their stance allowed for the *de facto* acceptance of a considerable group of Protestant exiles. Religious dissenters were tacitly tolerated in Cologne so long as they contributed to the city's commercial well-being and did not challenge its public Catholic identity.[33] Clearly,

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[29] See Chapter 2.

[30] SAA, Burgemeesters, Stadsrekeningen, 41, scans 153, 155–6. See also Van Nierop, *Treason*, 72–92, 180–85; Deen, 'Handwritten propaganda'.

[31] UA, Stadsarchief Utrecht, 13, Resoluties raad, 17 July, 19 August 1572. Compare a similar policy in Antwerp. Felix Archief, Schepenbank, 330.

[32] Stoppelaar, *Inventaris*, 127–8. The original records were lost in World War II.

[33] From the 1580s, when religious tensions in the Rhineland grew, the city magistrates displayed an increasingly intolerant attitude towards Protestant immigrants. Schilling, *Niederländische Exulanten*, 33–42, 59–63, 110–20. Compare Von Mallinckrodt, 'Reichweite'; Arndt, *Das Heilige*, 192–4; Van Roosbroeck, *Emigranten*, 135–57.

the Habsburg government in the Netherlands and local Jesuits regularly
put pressure on Cologne's government to expel its Protestant strangers,
and indeed stricter religious regulations for foreigners were introduced in
1570. But these measures were implemented half-heartedly.[34] The city's
pragmatic disposition also showed itself in its attitude towards the growing
numbers of Catholic refugees arriving after 1572. These newcomers had
relatively easy access to Cologne's political and religious elites and could
express their faith openly in the city, though some citizens worried that
committed Catholics from the Netherlands would strengthen the city's
militant, Jesuit-oriented faction. Immigrants from both sides could thus
be regarded with suspicion, as their religious subcultures threatened a
carefully balanced *corpus christianum* in Cologne.[35]

Having briefly flirted with the rebel coalition in 1578, Douai reconciled
itself with the king, and soon became a preeminent Catholic bastion in the
south. Unlike Cologne (*c.*40,000 inhabitants) it was a small university
town (*c.*10,000 inhabitants) and was firmly located in Habsburg territory.
In contrast to Amsterdam (*c.*25,000 inhabitants) it had relatively easy
access to its hinterland and to neighbouring France. As was common in
other places, the town authorities of Douai required all immigrants to
show proof of their Habsburg allegiance, and particularly of 'their cathol-
icity'.[36] Exiles seem to have enjoyed a respectable position in the Douai
community. Since the 1560s, the town had attracted a notable group of
Catholic émigrés from Protestant England and Scotland. They had
strengthened the town's Catholic credentials and added some academic
prestige to its young university. What is more, by the time Douai became a
centre of asylum for Netherlandish Catholics, the respectability of exile
had grown considerably in the Low Countries. Pamphlets that glorified
the exile experience, including Costerius' *Institutio Necessaria*, were pub-
lished in Douai. The town council sought to further its public adherence
to the king and church by organising processions that solemnly celebrated
recent victories of Habsburg armies in the Netherlands.[37]

### Accommodation

While different jurisdictional regimes and geographical locations helped
determine distinct immigration policies, accommodation problems were

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[34] HAK, Reformation, 23, 24, 60. Gibbs, 'Immigration and Civic Identity', 55–61;
Schilling, *Niederländische Exulanten*, 34–5.

[35] It is typical that Cologne's city fathers particularly welcomed the affluent Catholic merchants
from Antwerp, including the Portuguese and Spanish merchant colonies, who arrived in the
city after 1578. *Weinsberg*, 24–2–1578, 2–4–1578; Vázquez de Prada, *Lettres*, 292–4.

[36] *Inventaire*, BB, 20–2, 57–8.     [37] *Inventaire*, CC, 49–50.

strikingly similar in the three centres. In Amsterdam, the town authorities were simply too preoccupied with the military threat or were generally disinclined to deal with refugees. The availability of housing thus depended on one's financial means or personal connections. Members of religious orders tended to call on a network of local convent communities that they had befriended. The 'New nuns' of Ter Lely, for example, lodged several displaced religious in Amsterdam, including the priest-diarist Wouter Jacobsz.[38] In Cologne, the many religious houses in the city likewise facilitated the accommodation of clergy. Some of these had Netherlandish roots, such as the Carthusian monastery of St Barbara. Here, exiled priests found refuge with in-house compatriots.[39] Similar arrangements existed in other places. For example in 1572 the Poor Clares of Antwerp offered hospitality to exiled nuns from Holland to whom they were linked through parentage.[40] After the fall of Middelburg in 1574 the local Norbertine monks found refuge with their brethren of the St Michiels Abbey in Antwerp.[41] Reputation also played a role in such agreements. Evidence, albeit scant, suggests that religious from noble families sometimes preferred to make their own, more comfortable arrangements, if they considered hosting facilities in exile towns to be beneath their status. Lady Adriane Jacobsdochter from Aalst, for example, took a substantial amount of silver with her in exile, allowing her and her fellow nuns to buy a house in the Smeerstrasse of Cologne.[42] In Douai, the grand *refuge* of the nearby Abbey of Vaucelles provided suitable shelter to the expelled monks from the illustrious St Pieters Abbey of Ghent.[43]

For laypeople lacking such privileges, facilities were more limited. By 1573, housing prospects in Amsterdam had turned grim, as landlords took to refusing any more strangers 'who are impoverished or sick'.[44] In a town besieged and overcrowded, some refugees slept in the open air. During Easter 1573 a number of dead bodies were found on the streets. A missing homeless priest from Medemblik was eventually discovered dead 'in a corner of a war vessel'.[45] Wouter Jacobsz records hearing that living conditions in Cologne were much better,[46] but these rumours were

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[38] *DWJ*, I, 224–5.
[39] Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 12–13, 19; Hensen, 'Godfried van Mierlo', 205–15; Huyben, 'Nog een vergeten', 391–2; Scholtens, 'Godfried van Mierlo', 369–70; Scholtens, 'De priors', 3–4, 71–3; Molitor, *Das Erzbistum*, 553–8.
[40] Schoutens, *Geschiedenis*, 52–3.
[41] Prims, *Geschiedenis*, VIII-3, 211. Compare UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 610.
[42] Felix Archief, Notariaat, Egide Verbraecken, fo. 111r-112r, 16 November 1584.
[43] ARAB, Audiëntie, 910, fo. 52 and further, Reports St Pieters, Ghent, 1581; Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen', 19–20.
[44] *DWJ*, I, 299.    [45] *DWJ*, I, 211.    [46] *DWJ*, I, 440.

only half true. Cologne resident Hermann Weinsberg remarked in March 1580 how the city was 'completely filled with folk, so that not a single house is unoccupied, that's because of the war in the Netherlands'.[47] Disturbingly high rents were the result. Weinsberg himself seems to have profited from the housing crisis, by lodging two paying female exiles from Delft.

Those who could not afford rising prices were dependent on charity. Patchy evidence points to the existence of an informal network of Catholics who supported the less fortunate. In Amsterdam, the parish priest Maarten Donk (Duncanus) did his bit by inviting eighteen refugees to live in his house.[48] Jacob van Pamele seems to have done something similar in Douai and St Omer in the 1580s.[49] The family Van der Cruyce from Antwerp was particularly well-known for its hospitality to refugees. In 1573 they lodged and maintained several female religious who had escaped from Gouda.[50] At that time, Frans and Anselm van de Cruyce would hardly have expected that within a few years they themselves would be exiles. When Antwerp joined the revolt in the late 1570s, both men fled. A seventeenth-century hagiographer proudly recalled how about twenty-five fellow exiles lived in the house of Anselm and his wife Catherina Daneels in Liège. Together they turned their sanctuary into a vibrant prayer centre.[51] It is more difficult to establish whether Catholic nobles were also involved in such charity. Historians of Elizabethan England have noted the vital role of the Catholic gentry in accommodating travelling priests, but for the Dutch revolt only a few examples are known.[52] The Catholic lord of Montfoort near Utrecht, for example, provided a safe haven for displaced Catholics in the 1570s.[53] In Douai Eleonora of Montmorency, widow-countess of Hoogstraten, opened her house to the expelled magistrate Jerome de Brabant.[54]

### Making a living

Living conditions of refugees depended on the extent to which exiles could find alternative sources of incomes. For merchants this was easier

[47] *Weinsberg*, 16-3-1580, 19-7-1580, 16-4-1581, 2-1-1582.
[48] UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 498, Statement of financial compensation for Maarten Donk, 1574; Noordeloos, *Pastoor*, II, 47.
[49] *BN*, XVI, 526–37.     [50] *DWJ*, I, 232–3.     [51] De Smidt, *Doorluchtich*, 9–10.
[52] See Questier, *Catholicism* for examples and references.
[53] ARAB, Audiëntie, 1717/2, Request by Catholic citizens of Oudewater, January 1576; *DWJ*, I, ix; II, 772; Groenveld, 'Trouw en verraad'.
[54] ARAB, Audiëntie, 911, fo. 64–6, Reports Groeningen, 1583.

than for clergy and landowners whose properties had been taken by
the rebels. It appears that the Antwerp entrepreneurs who settled in
Cologne in the early 1580s were able to sustain and even expand their
businesses. Some of them owned international trading firms specialising
in luxury goods, such as silk and tapestries. Others had invested their
money and lived off the income from rents and loans. Their continuing
wealth is evident from wills, drawn up in Cologne, which list large
amounts of cash, jewels and velvet.[55] In July 1580, Hermann Weinsberg
remarked with dismay how some of Cologne's grandest townhouses were
now owned by 'strangers' from the Netherlands.[56] The city of Cologne
seems to have profited from the integration of this Antwerp network
into its commercial infrastructure. Exile may even have reinforced busi-
ness relationships among the Antwerp clique itself. It is notable that
during their years of displacement, several families intermarried, includ-
ing in 1585 the powerful De Robiano and De Smidt dynasties.[57] The
long-term effects of the mutual bonds shaped by the experience of exile
became especially visible after 1585, when the Antwerpers returned to
their retaken city.[58]

Outside the world of these merchant firms, coping strategies varied.
The two nuns who shared a little room in St Omer found a creative
solution to their poverty by teaching local wealthy girls.[59] Raijmundus
Waelrant, former organist at Antwerp's St Jacob's Church, made a living
by playing the organ of the archbishop of Cologne.[60] But not all refugees
were able to make exile work to their advantage. In the same city, the once
well-off burgomaster of Gouda, Jan Gerritsz Stempelse, reportedly lived
'a very modest' life, mostly dependent on charity provided by Jesuits. He
and numerous other exiles frequently sent out letters, vividly describing
their deplorable living circumstances and begging for money, patronage
and jobs.[61] While some of these requests were expressed using a
typical sixteenth-century patronage discourse, stressing dependence and

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[55] Felix Archief, Notariaat, Egide Verbraecken. See also Donnet, *Les exilés*.
[56] *Weinsberg*, 19-7-1580, 16-4-1581.
[57] Felix Archief, Notariaat, Egide Verbraecken, fo. 135r-137v, July 1585. Timmermans, *Patronen*, 106–7.
[58] See Chapter 6.
[59] ARAB, Audiëntie, 911, fo. 191–2, Reports St Spermaille, 1584. Other examples in Valvekens, *De Zuid-Nederlandsche*, 125, 147.
[60] Persoons, 'Musical Culture', 86.
[61] ARSI, Germaniae, Epp., 136-II, 137-II, 138-II, 157, Numerous letters from and about Jan Gerritsz Stempelse, addressed to the General of the Society of Jesus, 1572–82. See also Brom and Hensen, *Romeinsche bronnen*, 242, 280–1, 288, 293, 358; Canisius, *Beati Petri Canisii*, VII, 352–3.

poverty, there is no doubt that forced migration genuinely ruined many Catholics. In embattled enclaves such as Amsterdam, work opportunities were limited and food was scarce. In his diary, Wouter Jacobsz aptly summarised the challenges faced by the refugees:

They had always been men of good repute, they were accustomed to prosperity and they never stayed anywhere against their will; if they travelled from home, they did so for pleasure. And now they find themselves in a quite different condition . . . they have little prospect of returning to their own people in the short term. Then they have very little money from which to live and no means of obtaining more . . . Besides they realise they are not at home and that they live among strangers. They are deeply distressed because they lack the services of their family on whom they have always relied.[62]

Wouter was particularly shocked by the story of a female religious from a wealthy convent in Hoorn 'who had come to poverty to such an extent, that she went along the houses in the evening to sing devout songs in the hope of earning some money'. She reportedly did so 'when it was dark, because she was too embarrassed to do something like that in daylight'. Financial decline inevitably led to social humiliation. Displaced Catholics noted with concern how asylum blurred if not obliterated the usual signs of social distinction. Elizabeth Gerritsz, wife of Gouda burgomaster Stempelse, was said to eat poor man's food such as 'peas and buckwheat' and had no choice than 'to be anyone's guest, be it poor or rich'.[63] In the winter of 1573 even those with deep pockets found they had to queue for hours to obtain bread. The Catholic martyrologist and Amsterdam resident Pieter Opmeer later claimed that in 1573 alone more than seventy religious perished in the town.[64]

As the refugee crisis worsened in the early 1580s, more loyalists called upon the Habsburg government to step in. An expelled Frisian office-holder described to Alexander Farnese in 1581 how exiled magistrates in Groningen were deprived of their income because their possessions had been confiscated by rebels. The author deemed it the responsibility of the royal government to 'continue' the payments made previously to these office-holders 'because of the continuing exile' they were enduring 'in the service of his Majesty'.[65] Abandoned and marginalised, the Groningen club was equally appalled by the behaviour of royal troops. In a collective letter to Farnese they told the royal governor how they had expected the royal army in the north to be sympathetic to their cause. In contrast, they found His Majesty's soldiers to be behaving like 'beasts', in a way

[62] *DWJ*, I, 158–9.    [63] *DWJ*, I, 364, 388–9.    [64] Opmeer, *Martelaars-boek*, II, 222.
[65] ARAB, Audiëntie, 589, fo. 61, Letter of unknown author to Alexander Farnese, 26 January 1581.

'one wouldn't even expect of the enemy'.[66] Such complaints were not entirely ineffectual. We already saw how by 1580 exile had gradually gained some respectability in government circles. Alexander Farnese in particular was keen to employ the refugees as dedicated forces in his *reconquista* campaign. Thus, from the early 1580s he sought to improve their living conditions by distributing financial compensations, negotiating housing facilities and promising exiles lucrative jobs in the future government.[67]

Migration scholarship has traditionally concentrated on questions of economic integration and social assimilation. These approaches are of limited value when applied to the cases of iterant refugees. Most Catholic émigrés regarded their exile as temporary and desired a speedy return home. Only over the course of the 1580s and 1590s did some exiles lose these hopes, particularly those from the northern provinces. Once the refugees accepted an extended period of exile as a psychological reality, they began to seek economic and social assimilation in host towns. Jan Gerritsz Stempelse, for example, lobbied for jobs and future ecclesiastical canonries for his sons in Cologne.[68] Royalist magistrates from Holland sought to gain positions in the Brussels bureaucracy in the later 1580s and married into local political dynasties. Particularly at the universities of Cologne, Douai and Leuven, the impact of these permanent exiles was profound. Through the acquisition of professorships and establishment of scholarships and colleges, the Catholic migrants infused academic institutions with a cosmopolitan exile spirit.[69]

## Women and exile

These examples suggest that the Catholic diaspora was predominantly a male affair. Particularly among the laity, men migrated more often than women. Sources from Holland, Flanders and Brabant demonstrate that wives tended to stay at home with their children when their husbands went

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[66] ARAB, Audiëntie, 589, fo. 53, Letter by Frisian exiles to Alexander Farnese, 18 January 1581. For the situation in Groningen see Schroor and Knottnerus, 'De opstand', 124–40; Hoogland, 'De Friesche vlugtelingen'.

[67] ARAB, Audiëntie, 2855, 2552; *Correspondance d'Alexandre Farnese*, 53–4; Van Lokeren, *Chartes*, II, 432–4. More examples in Chapter 6.

[68] ARSI, Germaniae, Epp., 136-II, Jan Gerritsz Stempelse to the General, 9 August 1575 from Cologne; 156, Jan Gerritsz Stempelse to the General, 20 and 31 January 1578 from Cologne; 157, Jan Gerritsz Stempelse to the General, 31 March 1579 from Cologne; Brom and Hensen, *Romeinsche bronnen*, 242, 281, 293; Dusseldorpius, *Uittreksel*, 225; Luijten, Van Suchtelen, Baarsen, Kloek, Schapelhouman, *Dawn*, 587–8.

[69] See Chapter 7.

into exile. Characteristically, in his *Institutio Necessaria*, Johannes Costerius told his readers that love for their wives should not deter them from leaving.[70] At first sight these findings are not remarkable: migration historians have observed similar gender imbalances elsewhere in early modern Europe. They have also noted that husbands were likely to move first, to be followed by their wives later on.[71] Despite having different motives for leaving, religious refugees seem to have shared this general profile. Studies of Calvinist and Anabaptist exiles have revealed – albeit often implicitly – that men outnumbered women in these displaced communities too.

As a result of this striking gender imbalance, studies of religious exile have traditionally concentrated on male experiences and few have sought to explain the relative paucity of women.[72] Gendered labour divisions in early modern economies may have played a role, but this factor alone cannot account for the behaviour of religiously motivated refugees. It is possible that the dangers of travelling through war zones deterred some women from going into exile in the 1570s and 1580s. Concerns about female sexual honour featured prominently in contemporary accounts, but surviving records also reveal other considerations. Evidence from Holland, Flemish and Brabantine towns suggests that women often deliberately stayed at home while their male relatives moved away. Since a woman was less likely to be prosecuted or expelled by rebel authorities, she was in a better position to protect the family's possessions, to maintain the husband's business and to take financial care of her exiled relatives.

This protective role of women in the years of war appears to have had a strong legal basis as well. By staying in their homes, the wives of Catholic exiles could circumvent, or at least frustrate, the rebels' policy of 'annotating' and confiscating the possessions of escaped loyalists. We know that the legal position of married women with regard to property rights was relatively strong in the early modern Netherlands.[73] In previous years the duke of Alba had taken great pains to seize the confiscated property of sentenced rebels, because local law courts recognised the rights of women to claim fifty per cent of the possessions of their (late) husbands.[74] After 1572 Catholic women seem to have followed a similar strategy that took advantage of their property rights.[75] Officials in Holland, employed to

[70] Costerius, *Institutio*, ch. 5.    [71] Moch, *Moving Europeans*, 14–5, 83–5.
[72] But see Spohnholz, *Tactics*; Schunka, 'Konfession', 49–50.
[73] Glaudemans, *Om die wrake wille*, 183; Iterson, *Geschiedenis*, 354–411; Schmidt, 'Touching Inheritance', 175–89.
[74] Marcus, *Sententiën*, 465–9; Verheyden, *Le conseil*, 531–8; Wijsenbeek, 'Verhuizen', 163–5.
[75] See, for example, Tresoar, Eysinga, 2970, Request Doutzen van Sassinga, 1585.

annotate and rent out the properties of Catholic fugitives, regularly found themselves unable to proceed because of the ownership claims of female occupants. In Delft and Leiden, some confiscated houses were eventually rented to the wives of the exiled owner.[76] In July 1592 an Amsterdam widow wrote to the Habsburg government that, although she had a 'great desire' to base herself in Catholic territory, she was anxious that her property would then be seized and hence benefit the rebels. She had apparently made it her objective to support the royal cause by staying in her house, where she also secretly organised Catholic services.[77] In this way, Catholic women played a crucial role in the survival of an underground Catholic subculture in rebel-controlled areas.

While the formal Catholic ecclesiastical infrastructure gradually collapsed during the Dutch revolt, an informal Catholic organisation took its place, allowing women to craft a role of their own. Correspondence of the 1580s demonstrates how women acted as key brokers within exile networks, providing financial support to displaced relatives, accommodating priests travelling in secret and connecting the émigré community to the home front. During the Calvinist regime in Bruges, local canon Jacob de Heere recorded how he and other expelled citizens received visits from their female relatives, who provided them with letters and money.[78] In a similar way, the Frisian exile Hans Roorda was able to stay in touch with his home village. Correspondence from 1587 to 1588 refers to his receiving a regular supply of cash and food. One of his intermediaries was Yefck Cornelisdochter, who travelled back and forth between Friesland and Hans' safe haven just across the German border. She herself lived at Sassingahuis, the former residence of Roorda, reportedly to prevent the seizure of his goods.[79]

For members of religious orders the implications of exile also appear to have been gender-specific. In a society that regarded independently travelling women with suspicion, displacement was a sensitive issue for female religious. What is more, the Tridentine movement within the Catholic Church became increasingly obsessed with rules of enclosure. In the 1570s, a number of female congregations from Holland based themselves in Habsburg territory, German lands or even Spain and Portugal: yet such relocations were not always deemed appropriate. In Douai in the 1580s,

[76] NA, Rekenkamer ter Auditie, 4544, Delft, fo. 2–5; 4547, The Hague, fo. 20. Similar examples in Peer, 'Een 17e-eeuwse carmelites', 51; Fasel, 'De Leidse glippers', 76; Noordeloos, 'Fugitieve personen', 84.
[77] ARAB, Audiëntie, 1830/4, Request from Brecht Luycas, July 1592.
[78] De Heere, 'Le manuel', 43–60. Also De Smet, 'Het dagelijks leven', 71.
[79] Tresoar, Eysinga, 2955, Correspondence Hans Roorda, 1587–1588; 2971, Request Hans Roorda, 1590. See also Zijlstra, 'Studying Abroad', 300–1.

nuns who had recently escaped from rebel Flanders received a cool welcome. Local authorities kept a close eye on their daily activities as well as on the amount of time the nuns spent outside their homes. Clothing habits were scrutinised. Letters of recommendation, written by local priests, served to confirm the nuns' impeccable lifestyle in refugee towns.[80] Anxious about the loss of their religious standing and sexual honour, many female religious preferred to stay in their convents as long as possible. When in 1574 Abbess Stephana van Rossum reasoned that leaving the abbey of Rijnsburg near Leiden was necessary to 'avoid further perils', the other nuns strongly opposed a journey to Catholic Utrecht. If they absolutely had to travel, they would rather be taken in by nearby relatives.[81] Records from the high-profile congregation of St Spermalie in Bruges similarly demonstrate that concerns about sexual harassment by soldiers led several elite families to house their 'unprotected virgins' for the time being. Several independently travelling nuns were later criticised by officials for their self-chosen exile in St Omer.[82]

These examples bear out recent conclusions in historiography. The dilemmas of exile, enclosure and reputation experienced by sixteenth-century women resonate with findings of scholars about the increased social disciplining of women in post-Reformation Europe. The 'masculine' nature of Catholic exile was at least partly the outcome of a Counter-Reformation campaign that sought to diminish women's public freedom of movement and to enforce the cloistering of religious.[83] Although the gender imbalance is comparable among Protestant and Catholic refugees, an obsession with female chastity in Catholic religious circles made the notion of migration and travel particularly sensitive. At the same time, these examples point to the paradoxical role of laywomen within the embattled Catholic Church. The Tridentine movement was highly suspicious of female agency, and yet laywomen played an indispensable role in the endurance of Catholicism during the years of war and chaos. As the Church of Rome increasingly relied on improvised female networks in rebel territory, its religious culture also turned more domestic. Chapter 7 explores in greater detail how a new type of female religious engagement was crucial to the survival and subsequent rejuvenation of Catholic spirituality in the Dutch Republic.

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[80] ARAB, Audiëntie, 911, Reports Groeningen, fo. 51 and further.
[81] Hüffer, *Bronnen voor de geschiedenis*, 1393. See also ARAB, Audiëntie, 911, Reports St Marguerite, fo. 109.
[82] ARAB, Audiëntie, 911, Reports St Spermaille, fo. 190–8.
[83] Wiesner-Hanks, *Women*, 224–32; Hsia, *The World*, 82–95, 144–58; Laven, *Virgins*; Diefendorf, *From Penitence*; Pipkin, *Rape*, 138–89.

### The politics of cleansing

Experiences of exile were partly shaped by the responses of those who stayed behind. Because the Catholic refugees often represented the religious, political and sometimes economic establishment of their home communities, the social fabric of rebel towns was dramatically changed after their departure. As discussed previously, early modern communities were often conceived as a *corpus christianum* or sacred body social, whose constituent parts were sometimes likened symbolically to those of God's body.[84] The physical and symbolic spaces that the exiles left behind thus compelled local citizens to redefine the concept of their body social. This sensitive process coincided with the gradual destruction of the Catholic ecclesiastical order. Although the rebels claimed that their movement was aimed at the 'restoration' of 'lost freedoms', the Dutch revolt in fact encouraged a rethinking of the traditional *corpus christianum*. It is significant that Protestant exiles, who re-entered the same communities, played a decisive role in the redefinition of the urban community during the revolt. More specifically, the parallel forces of Catholic emigration and Protestant immigration spawned interrelated campaigns of religious, political and social cleansing.

The first operation is most well known and involved a gradual replacement of the Catholic Church order with a Protestant regime. As early as 23 August 1572, the rebel States of Holland proclaimed that all ecclesiastical properties, as well as goods left by Catholic fugitives, had to be registered.[85] In the following months, numerous church treasures were sold on the States' behalf. Provincial administrators supervised incomes collected from ecclesiastical lands. Convents, chapels and abbeys were seized, reallocated to secular institutions or broken up altogether.[86] The demise of Catholic property holdings thus predated the official suspension of Catholic worship in 1573. This suggests that confiscation practices initially served financial purposes. The rebel towns desperately needed funds for the war and reasoned that the wealth of the Catholic Church should be regarded as communal property, to be used for the common good.[87]

A slightly different argument was made with regard to the private possessions of the absentee citizens who had fled the conflict.[88] The

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[84]  Davis, 'The Sacred'; Muir, *Ritual*, 115.
[85]  Tracy, 'Émigré', 255; Noordeloos, 'Fugitieve personen', 73–92.
[86]  Alimentation payments were made to religious who had not fled to royal territory. See for this arrangement Chapter 7.
[87]  Tracy, *The Founding*, 109–13; Van der Schueren, 'Bijdrage', 48–69; Van Beeck Calkoen, *Onderzoek*, 35–71. Also Decavele, *Het eind*, 39.
[88]  Parts of the following were published previously in Janssen, 'Exiles'.

States of Holland reasoned that those who had 'affiliated with the enemy and who have left *patria*' now had no right to claim their goods.[89] Rather than being confiscated, however, the possessions of 'fugitives' were 'annotated' on behalf of the government. After all, the refugees might one day return or reconcile with the rebel regime. From 1572 houses of escaped Catholic citizens were temporarily rented out while incomes from lands and rents were collected by administrators. In 1580–81, when the revolt turned more radical, so did attitudes towards Catholic ownership. Placards announced the threat that the possessions of all loyalist 'absentees' would be seized. City records reveal the windfall gained from the systematic dispossession of ecclesiastical and private property in these years. Incomes generated from confiscations remind us of the key role played by Catholic exiles in the financial support of their enemies' activities.[90] The Dutch revolt was financed to a significant extent by Catholic wealth.

The dramatic transformation of the religious order went hand in hand with a purge of the former Habsburg body politic. Paradoxically, this political cleansing was partly the result of the behaviour of royal administrative elites themselves. By leaving their towns, loyalist burgomasters, bailiffs and other officials created a political vacuum that needed to be filled.[91] From 1572, William of Orange made effective use of these vacancies by granting key offices to committed supporters of the revolt. Among the recipients were numerous returning Protestant exiles from Emden, Wesel, Norwich and London. Some of them had never held a political position.[92] In Flanders and Brabant a similar but even more profound political renewal emerged after 1578.[93] Meanwhile, the royal government sought to fuel doubts regarding the authority of these appointments by maintaining its own political bodies in exile. For example, in the 1570s there existed two competing Courts of Holland: a rebel institution in The Hague and a royalist version in Utrecht. A similar schizophrenic administrative structure existed within the

[89] NA, Hof van Holland, 323, Letter William of Orange and the States of Holland, 22 April 1573. The distinction between ecclesiastical and secular property was not always made in the accounts. NA, Rekenkamer ter Auditie; Grafelijkheidsrekenkamer.

[90] Compare Tracy, *The Founding*, 109–13. Geldof, 'Calvinisme', 48; Marnef, *Het calvinistisch bewind*, 232–8; Mol, 'Kloostergoederen'; Prims, *Beelden*, 133–42.

[91] In his *Annales*, Franciscus Dusseldorpius, later pointed to the opportunities which the refugees had unintentionally offered to Orange: Dusseldorpius, *Uittreksel*, ix, 113, 131.

[92] Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 146–7; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 157–9; Hibben, *Gouda*, 53–93; Lamet, 'The Vroedschap', 13–42; Van Nierop, *The Nobility*, 181–5, 193–5.

[93] A comprehensive picture of these purges in Brabant and Flanders is lacking though. Aerts, 'Spanje', 23–36; Decavele, 'De mislukking', 628–36; Marnef, 'Brabants calvinisme', 12–15; Marnef, *Het calvinistisch bewind*, 146–57.

Council of Flanders which developed rival branches in Ghent and Douai in the early 1580s.[94]

### Social cleansing

So far scholars have studied these religious and political changes in the context of the Protestant Reformation and the emergence of an independent Dutch Republic. Yet forced migration and religious cleansing also served to redefine the social fabric of urban communities. A number of examples illuminate this agenda. From 1572 onwards, many residences of escaped Catholic citizens in Holland were deliberately assigned to repatriating Protestants. In Delft, for instance, Adriaan van Swieten, sentenced by Alba's Council of Troubles and recently returned from exile, occupied the house of the Catholic fugitive and painter Anthonis van Blocklandt on the Langedijk.[95] Philip van der Aa, originally from Mechelen, returned to Holland in 1573 and successfully asked William of Orange for the comfortable house of a loyalist 'absentee' in the Nobelstraat in The Hague.[96] In this way, property of exiled Catholics helped returning Protestant outlaws to assert their re-entry into the community.

There is ample evidence that returning Protestants also profited hugely from confiscations and sales. William of Orange's steward, Arend van Dorp, was notorious for the wealth he amassed by buying and selling forfeited Catholic goods in Zeeland.[97] In Ghent the Calvinist minister Nicaus Verschueren bought himself a townhouse of the Norbertine order for a bargain price.[98] These victims of the former regime now had the opportunity to clear their debts at the expense of those who had been responsible for their suffering.[99] In Gouda, the administrator responsible for 'annotated goods' was ordered to grant the empty house of a Catholic priest to the widow of a Mennonite man who had been executed a few years before.[100] William of Orange made inventive use of this combination of gift giving and retribution. Not only did he frequently confer

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[94] Aerts, 'Spanje'; De Schepper, 'Brabant'; Smit, 'De omzetting'.

[95] NA, Rekenkamer ter Auditie, 4544, fo. 8r; Grafelijkheidsrekenkamer, 683, fo. 4r. It concerns the painter Anthonis Blocklandt (Anthonie van Montfoort). He returned to Delft in December 1576. EAD, Oud Archief Delft, 388, List of returned refugees, 1576–1580.

[96] NA, Rekenkamer ter Auditie, 4547. Compare Smit, *Den Haag*, 206–7.

[97] Van der Schueren, 'Bijdrage', 48–108. Compare Marnef, *Het calvinistisch bewind*, 232–8; Vandamme, 'Een protestantse familie'; Stoppelaar, *Inventaris*, 158.

[98] Valvekens, *De Zuid-Nederlandsche*, 123.    [99] Tracy, 'Émigré', 266.

[100] She received the house by way of alimentation. *DWJ*, I, xviii, 398; NA, Rekenkamer ter Auditie, 4571, Annotated goods at Gouda, 1573–1574.

incomes taken from ecclesiastical properties, he also distributed the precious possessions of escaped Catholic officials among members of his entourage. In April 1573, the prince bestowed the humanist library of Joachim Hopperus – a high official in the Brussels government – to his confidant, Marnix van St Aldegonde.[101] Two years later, Nicolaas Mandekens received orders from William of Orange to deliver furniture to that handsome Nobelstraat house that had been awarded to Philip van der Aa. His commission stipulated that these commodities had to be taken from the houses of fugitive loyalists.[102] When the prince took residence in Antwerp in 1578, his mansion was decorated with furniture previously owned by the Catholic exile Godfried Sterck and the recently expelled Jesuits.[103]

Apart from rehabilitating returning Protestant exiles, such transfers also served to fashion the ideals of a new urban community and to criminalise the escaping Catholics. The rebels made sophisticated use of highly symbolic urban spaces in this regard. In Leiden, the house of Claes Oem Jansz Buytewech, one of the town's wealthiest magistrates who had escaped to Utrecht, was granted in 1573 to Pieter Cornelisz, the town's new Reformed minister. On the prominent Breestraat, the residence of fugitive burgomaster Cornelis Claesz van der Hooge was occupied by the formerly Emden-based Jan van Hout, the town secretary of the new regime.[104] A similar reversal of roles and its dramatisation via urban space could be observed in Gouda in 1574. The house of burgomaster Jan Gerrit Hey, a staunch Catholic who had been involved in a loyalist counter-coup, was assigned to Albrecht van Egmond, recently appointed officer in the rebel army.[105] During the Calvinist regime in Ghent, the house of the abbot of St Boudelo characteristically became the administrative office of the rebel Chamber of Accounts.[106] Hence, these reallocations were not merely practical solutions to accommodation problems. We know that the urban landscape in sixteenth-century towns was infused with political meanings and religious values. A re-colouring of contested

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[101] *Correspondentie Willem van Oranje*, 2808.

[102] *Correspondentie Willem van Oranje*, 2027. Mandekens also received orders to decorate the meeting room of the States of Holland with tapestries taken from the house of the loyalist countess of Aremberg. Another administrator, Jacob Muys, was ordered to pay 10,926 pound to 'his Excellency's kitchen'. These and other examples in Smit, *Den Haag*, 293; Tracy, 'Émigré', 258.

[103] Prims, 'De huisraad' 132–3.

[104] NA, Rekenkamer ter Auditie, 4565, Overview of annotated houses at Leiden, 1573. See also Fasel, 'De Leidse glippers', 83.

[105] *DWJ*, I, 1; Hibben, *Gouda*, 80, 265. For Egmond see De Meij, *De watergeuzen*, 18, 22–5, 28.

[106] Aerts, 'Spanje', 27.

urban spaces made powerfully visual the breakdown of the old order and the establishment of a new regime. By rearranging the prime symbols of power, the rebels sought to legitimise their authority.[107]

These spatial cleansing practices were particularly meaningful because they resonated with established traditions. Notably, the rebels drew on Alba's dramatic confiscation policy, still very much alive in memory. His Council of Troubles had previously sought to wipe out the memory of dissent in Low Countries by appropriating or destroying the dwellings of convicted rebels. After 1572, the new regime employed the same purifying rituals in an attempt to obliterate the memory of *their* enemy. In 1577, for instance, the Ghent residence of Lieven Snouck, a former member of the Council of Troubles now exiled in Douai, was destroyed by a mob.[108] During the Protestant takeover of Amsterdam in 1578, the rebel government marked the exclusion of Catholic loyalists in a semi-legal way. They transported the representatives of the Habsburg regime to the Diemerdijk, a place just outside the jurisdiction of the city where banished criminals were traditionally sent away to.[109] In this way, they effectively criminalised the loyalists, literally turning them into outcasts.[110] According to the contemporary law scholar Joos de Damhouder, the sentence of banishment was generally regarded 'a civil death'.[111] The use of banishment rituals thus served to cast members of the Catholic exile community as outsiders, expelled eternally from a cleansed *corpus christianum*. The subsequent appropriation of their physical possessions sealed their removal from the body social altogether. As we will see, these cleansing rituals indeed reinforced the sense of exclusion and estrangement among the Catholics in exile. But the tendency to 'other' the émigrés also encouraged them to reinvent and organise themselves in exile. Rebel policies in fact facilitated the dramatic rise of Catholic militancy in asylum centres.

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[107] Compare Arnade, *Beggars*, 166–211; Boone, 'Urban Space', 621–40; Walsham, *The Reformation*, 4–16.
[108] Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen', 25; Boone, 'The Dutch Revolt', 368.
[109] Dudok van Heel, 'Waar waren', 13. Compare a similar expulsion ceremony of Jesuits in Antwerp in 1578. Poncelet, *Histoire*, I, 302–3.
[110] Coy, 'Beggars', 619–38; Glaudemans, *Om die wrake wille*, 281–301; Harrington, *Reordering*, 235; Van Dülmen, *Theatre*, 45–7.
[111] De Damhouder, *Practycke*, 78. Compare Shaw, *The Politics of Exile*.

# 4    The Counter-Reformation of the refugee

Catholic refugees who arrived in their chosen safe haven must have felt confused by the consequences of their flight. On the one hand, exile would have brought a sense of recovered purity. In Catholic asylum centres, everyday life was no longer polluted by public Protestantism or administered by a dubious rebel authority. Refugees also regained access to vital religious facilities, which allowed them to practise their faith openly. This was important because sixteenth-century Catholicism was an intrinsically public religion, entrenched in the urban infrastructure and made tangible through processions, statues, images and relics. Yet on the other hand, exile spawned feelings of self-doubt and defeatism, even despair. Displacement transformed respected men and women into marginalised outsiders. Wouter Jacobsz aptly recorded how refugees in Amsterdam struggled to come to terms with their new, unprivileged status: 'the good Catholics, who have left their towns because they would have no part in the godlessness perpetrated by the Beggars [rebels], are gripped by a melancholy, which cannot be adequately described.'[1]

Exile and the sense of rootlessness thus prompted many refugees to rethink their world views and redefine their relationships with relatives, friends and those who had not gone into exile. This social and spiritual reorientation often resulted in a radicalisation of religious identities. It also forged new connections that united an imagined community of faith. Willem Lindanus, himself expelled from Roermond, noted this shifting mentality when he visited the expatriate community in Cologne in 1577. Lindanus was surprised to find that the misery of exile had in fact triggered an engaging spirit of group bonding, pride and militancy among displaced Catholics. Excited by this development, Lindanus saw signs that in Cologne a new 'Golden age' for Catholicism was on the horizon.[2]

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[1] *DWJ*, I, 158–9.
[2] ARSI, Germaniae, Epp., 138-I, 223, Jan Gerritsz Stempelse to the General, 27 June 1577 from Cologne; Brom, 'Twee geschriften', 296–99. Similar remarks about the militant spirit

Lindanus' account of the contradictory effects of exile resonates with conclusions in scholarship. Historians of the Reformation have pointed, for example, to the unifying as well as radicalising impact of exile on evangelical Protestants. We know that in places such as Geneva, Emden and London, Calvinist leadership fostered a sense of fraternity among diverse groups of evangelical refugees. Especially in towns where strangers' churches controlled religious facilities for immigrants, many exiles gradually adopted a form of Reformed Protestantism.[3] Forced migration similarly transformed early modern Jewry. It has been argued that the expulsions of conversos from the Iberian Peninsula served as catalysts for a heightened sense of Sephardic identity, stimulating social discipline, doctrinal re-education and religious uniformity among its members in diaspora.[4] The 'confessionalising' of these refugee communities has often been described from a particular Calvinist or Jewish angle, but much evidence suggests a broad pattern of similarity among religious exiles across Reformation Europe. More specifically, cross-confessional comparisons point to the guiding role of local infrastructures. In negotiating their exile, sixteenth-century refugees found inspiration in the religious facilities, charitable institutions and social networks they encountered in their place of asylum. This infrastructure channelled the experience of exile. How, then, did such local facilities condition the responses of displaced Catholics in disparate places such as Amsterdam, Cologne or Douai? How exactly did exile generate the construction of a new Catholic self-consciousness?

### The Jesuit enterprise

There was no blueprint for a Catholic Church in exile. In contrast to their Protestant and Jewish counterparts, Catholic émigrés did not establish their own strangers' churches or 'nations' in exile. As members of the universal Church of Rome, they were expected to assimilate into existing parishes. Yet here, refugees lacked the privileges and status they had enjoyed at home. 'They found themselves now utterly forlorn,' Wouter Jacobsz wrote about his fellow émigrés, 'not knowing where to turn for consolation.'[5] While Catholicism had provided the *raison d'être* for flight,

in the Cologne exile community in Torrentius, *Correspondance*, 182–6. More about Lindanus' exile in Spiertz, 'Wilhelmus Lindanus' and Van Beuningen, *Wilhelmus Lindanus*, 16–7, 285–8, 398–408.

[3] Overviews in Grell, *Brethren*; Benedict, *Christ's Churches*; Pettegree, *Emden*; Greengrass, *Longman Companion*, 171–85; Balsamo and Lastraioli, *Chemins de l'exil*.

[4] Bodian, *Hebrews*, 96–131; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 294–330; Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, 14–5. Compare Schilling, 'Christliche und jüdische'.

[5] *DWJ*, I, 319.

many exiles felt socially estranged from the Catholic communities in which they settled. They looked for alternative affiliations that could restore their lost prestige and reaffirm their position within the Church of Rome.

These demands matched surprisingly well with the supply offered by the Society of Jesus. Founded by the Spanish nobleman-priest Ignatius of Loyola in 1540, this pioneering religious order fashioned itself as the preeminent intellectual force of the Counter-Reformation movement. Education, mission and propaganda were its main spheres of activity. The Society of Jesus flourished from the second half of the sixteenth century, but its success was not spread equally across Europe. As we have seen, in the Habsburg Netherlands the order had met with strong opposition from existing ecclesiastical institutions; it probably did not help that its founder was a Spaniard. As a result, there were few Jesuit foundations in the Low Countries on the eve of the revolt.[6] But in Cologne, Douai and St Omer, precisely the areas that turned into centres of Catholic asylum in the 1570s and 1580s, the Society of Jesus had firm bases.[7]

From the start, the Jesuits showed a keen interest in refugees from the troubled Low Countries. Their identification with the 'victims of Protestant aggression' fit well with their combative attitude and Counter-Reformation agenda. In Cologne, Douai, St Omer and Trier, Jesuits helped accommodate displaced Catholics, particularly those belonging to the higher echelons of society: magistrates, canons, bishops and abbots. Other forms of support included their lobbying on behalf of exiles in need of jobs and other forms of patronage.[8] Yet the Jesuits offered more than just charity and sociability: they also provided refugees with the tools to organise themselves as a community. In 1575, Rector Frans Coster, himself from Mechelen, founded a Marian sodality in Cologne, modelled after the confraternity he had established in Douai a few years earlier.[9] Although the Marian confraternity was initially intended for students and never catered exclusively to exiles, surviving lists of membership from Cologne demonstrate that the sodality became hugely

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[6] See Chapter 1. Van Hoeck, *Schets*, 2–20; Marinus, 'Kampioenen', 12–5; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 71–3.

[7] The Jesuits in Douai were expelled for a brief period in 1578 when the town became involved with the revolt. Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 16–7.

[8] HAK, Jesuiten, A17, A18, A19; Felix Archief, Schepenbank 330, 15 November 1572; Brom and Hensen, *Romeinsche bronnen*, 280–1; Schoutens, *Geschiedenis*, 100; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 18–27.

[9] Châttelier, *Europe of the Devout*, 3–15; Kettenmeyer, *Die Anfänge*, 4–10; Poncelet, *Histoire*, II, 322. For a broader background see also Lazar, 'The First Jesuit', 132–8; Von Mallinckrodt, 'Reichweite', 16–47.

popular among Netherlandish expatriates. By the early 1580s, whole convent communities from Brabant and Flanders had joined the club. The entry of exiled magistrates, merchants and the local papal nuncio added further lustre to the Jesuit enterprise.[10] Representatives from the exile community also served as prefects of the sodality, which was later organised around several socially distinct 'departments'.[11]

The remarkable appeal of the Marian confraternity can be explained partly by its Netherlandish roots. The Jesuit college in Cologne and its main school, the Gymnasium Tricoronatum, had long incorporated members from the Netherlands.[12] But Coster's new project was also able to expand because it addressed the specific social, economic and spiritual needs of the displaced community. First, it served as a support network, offering financial help and medical care to immigrant members who often lacked access to local institutions. The presence of several leading Antwerp entrepreneurs, such as Van der Cruyce and Van den Steene, suggests that in Cologne the sodality also provided an institutional framework that could compensate for the loss of business contacts at home.[13] Second, the Jesuit-led foundation fostered a sense of solidarity and belonging among displaced Catholics. Resembling an artificial kinship group, the members – clergy and laity – engaged in charity work, attended funerals of their fellow *sodales* and regularly banded together to pray for Habsburg victories in the Netherlands. In a sixteenth-century society, in which corporate associations were key to urban life, the Marian confraternity was a godsend for immigrants. Their problematic background as outsiders could now be used as a positive marker of identity, a source of pride and respectability.[14]

By organising the refugees as a group, Frans Coster sought to play a guiding role in confronting the existential crisis faced by many exiles. Third, then, the sodalities in Cologne, Douai and St Omer introduced refugees to a new spiritual agenda. In his *Libellus sodalitatis* Coster later

[10] HAK, Jesuiten, A52, Lists of membership (1576–1588). The sodality also included members of other religious orders based in Cologne, notably the Carthusians. Their convent of St Barbara typically accommodated a number of high-profile exiles from the Netherlands. Kettenmeyer, *Die Anfänge*, 22; Huyben, 'Nog een vergeten', 391–2; Scholtens, 'Godfried van Mierlo', 369–70; Molitor, *Das Erzbistum*, 553–60; Hansen, *Nuntiaturberichte*.

[11] HAK, Jesuiten, A52a, List of prefects (1576–1589). On the later development of the sodality see Heal, *The Cult*, 250–61; Von Mallinckrodt, 'Reichweite', 16–47.

[12] HAK, Jesuiten, A17, A18, A19, Correspondence, 1543–1585. Compare Kuckhoff, *Die Geschichte*, 267–76; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 6–18; Poncelet, *Histoire*, I, 115–6.

[13] HAK, Jesuiten, A52, Lists of membership (1576–1589); Lerius, *Kronyk*, 8; Timmermans, *Patronen*, 47–57.

[14] Terpstra, 'The Politics', 1–8; Black, 'The Development', 19–23; Châttelier, *Europe of the Devout*.

asserted that the confraternity in Cologne had been intended 'to preserve the old religion in the imperial city'.[15] Yet many of its Netherlandish members were introduced to a type of Catholicism that was quite different from the religious culture they were familiar with. Styled in accordance with Tridentine guidelines, the Marian sodality propagated an exuberant Catholic self-confidence and offered its *sodales* exercises that served to shape a more disciplined and sharply defined confessional identity. Among other things, they were expected to confess weekly, take communion monthly and to internalise recent decrees of the Council of Trent. Detailed instructions were given to show how members could defend themselves against the temptations of the devil and the threats of heresy. According to Coster, the construction of this combative attitude required a disciplining of the mind as well as the body. His manual characteristically explained how specific gestures and movements during prayer contributed to spiritual strengthening and a profound engagement with the divine.[16] The communal character of these exercises was exemplified in public activities such as penitent processions, open-air 'conversion sessions' and book burnings.[17] In this way, Coster sought to transform the exiles' attitude of passive victimhood into a confessionalised group mentality that was assertive and militant.

Importantly, Coster's goals were aimed at both private and public life. Members of the confraternity were encouraged to adopt a pious lifestyle, not least 'to set a good example' for relatives, friends, business partners and neighbours.[18] Fighting heresy in the local community was emphasised as a particularly noble task. To this end, the sodality's handbooks provided helpful overviews of arguments that could be used in discussions with Protestants. This must have been a relative novelty to Netherlandish Catholics. We know that Tridentine reform had made little progress in the Habsburg Netherlands prior to the outbreak of revolt. We saw in Chapter 1 how Netherlandish clerical leaders tended to offer their flock highly traditional messages that did little to mobilise them for a common fight against heresy.[19] Many Catholic exiles must have felt that they had

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[15] Coster, *Libellus sodalitatis*. Many editions exist. I have used the Dutch version, entitled *Het boecksken der broederschap*, preface (no page numbers). The first edition appeared in Cologne in 1576. Poncelet, *Histoire*, II, 324–5.

[16] Coster, *Het boecksken*, 284–6. Pertinent assessments are offered in Châttelier, *Europe of the Devout*, esp. 42–4; Heal, *The Cult*, 250–60; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 137–8; Johnson, *Magistrates*, 138–40.

[17] As becomes clear from HAK, Jesuiten, A51; Hansen, *Rheinische Akten*, 703–4, 716; Kettenmeyer, *Die Anfänge*, 16–8. Compare Châttelier, *Europe of the Devout*, 33–46; Harding, 'The Mobilization', 85–104.

[18] Coster, *Het boecksken*, preface.    [19] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 44–93. See Chapter 1.

entered an altogether different world when participating in the militant sodalities of Cologne, Douai and St Omer.

## Confessionalisation

Of course, these ambitious instructions did not necessarily reflect daily practice. How can we measure the actual impact of the Jesuit enterprise on the exile population? Sceptics might argue that the Marian sodality was an exclusive club: it was closed to women and primarily catered to students, priests and magistrates. The self-congratulatory Jesuit reports of the sodality's astounding successes served particular propagandistic purposes. What is more, Jesuit-inspired Tridentine Catholicism had no monopoly in a place like Cologne. As recent studies have emphasised, the imperial city accommodated a variety of 'Catholic cultures' in the second half of the sixteenth century.[20] There was even an underground Reformed church with strong Netherlandish links.[21] This outpost of clandestine Calvinism doubtless held little attraction for Catholic refugees, but they may have been equally suspicious of Jesuit 'novelties'.

All the same, a variety of sources indicate that the Society of Jesus was a significant mobilising force. As we have seen, many refugees, appalled by the destruction of their religious order at home, struggled to create new identities for themselves in exile. In confronting their spiritual crisis, a significant portion of the émigré community appears to have been receptive to the Society's radical vocabulary. In their annual report for 1582, for example, the Society remarked on the large numbers of fugitives from the Low Countries that confessed regularly with them in Cologne.[22] Correspondence with the Jesuit general in Rome contains frequent references to displaced Catholics, some of whom addressed their concerns directly to him.[23] The exiles' willingness to align themselves with the Jesuit project is also evident from wills that specified gifts to the Society.[24] The high status of the Marian *sodales* within the émigré community was confirmed when one of the prefects died in August 1585. Antwerp-born merchant Jodocus van der Cruyce was granted a solemn funeral procession through the streets of Cologne, in which

[20] Heal, *The Cult*, 207–61; Molitor, *Das Erzbistum*. A critical view in Johnson, *Magistrates*, 138–40.

[21] Van Roosbroeck, *Emigranten*, 135–57; Schilling, *Niederländische Exulanten*, esp. 110–21.

[22] Hansen, *Rheinische Akten*, 754.

[23] ARSI, Germaniae, Epp., 135-II to 138-II; 152 to 164. HAK, Jesuiten, A17, A18, A19.

[24] Felix Archief, Notariaat, Egide Verbraecken, fo. 138r-140r, Will of Cornelis van Honsum, 14 August 1585. See also Donnet, *Exilés*.

more than 300 fellow exiles were said to have participated.[25] Cologne citizen Hermann Weinsberg likewise found that the Jesuit headquarters in his city had grown into a gathering place for Netherlandish expatriates. When he was invited to a dinner party at the house of the regent of the Jesuit college in March 1582, Weinsberg met the exile Jan Gerritsz Stempelse, founding member of the sodality, in the sort of convivial encounter so typical of the émigrés' social circle.[26] Indeed, the Marian confraternity's list of membership reveals that by 1584 it had become a prominent social hub where expelled elites from different parts of the Low Countries mixed.[27]

The combination of sociability and religious instruction proved equally popular in Douai and St Omer. In Douai, the local *refuge* of the Abbey of Vaucelles served as a favourite centre for high-profile exiles, including the abbot of the St Pieters Abbey of Ghent. Visitors noted how refugees were entertained at Vaucelles with 'good meals' and occasional 'singing concerts', while being introduced to local Jesuit priests.[28] Among them was Jan David, himself an exile from Kortrijk and one of the most prolific authors of Jesuit polemic.[29] Johannes Costerius, who had composed an upbeat, heroic interpretation of the exile experience in his *Institutio Necessaria*, was also a regular guest at Vaucelles.[30] Within a year of its founding, the Douai branch of Frans Coster's Marian confraternity counted 630 members. Excited by its successes, Coster asserted in December 1578 that 'since the erection of the sodalities, there has been such a change in the behaviour of the *sodales*, which even strikes the exiles themselves.'[31] Similar stories could be heard in St Omer, where the local Jesuit school grew rapidly after the influx of refugees from Flanders. In around 1580 it accommodated about 400 boys, who were routinely integrated into the confraternity framework.[32] As we will see, these social interactions gradually infused the exiles' vocabulary with Jesuit ideas. As early as 1574, a group of Cologne-based refugees lobbied for the establishment of Jesuit colleges in the Netherlands, which they believed would

[25] HAK, Jesuiten, A52a, List of prefects (1576–1589); Kettenmeyer, *Die Anfänge*, 28. Also compare the observations of Laevinus Torrentius who visited Cologne in 1584. Torrentius, *Correspondance*, 152–3; 182–6.

[26] *Weinsberg*, 9 March 1582.

[27] HAK, Jesuiten, A52, Lists of membership (1576–1588).

[28] ARAB, Audiëntie, 910, fo. 52–100, Reports St Pieters, Ghent, April 1581.

[29] ARAB, Audiëntie, 911, fo. 51–98, Reports Groeningen, July, 1583. For David see also Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen', 14–6; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 150–3.

[30] See the analysis in Chapter 2.

[31] ARSI, Germaniae, Epp., 157, Frans Coster to the General, 20 December 1578. Compare Poncelet, *Histoire*, II, 326.

[32] Poncelet, *Histoire*, I, 324; II, 322.

galvanise a renewed Catholic spirituality in areas that had been infected by heresy.[33]

Gauging the impact of Jesuit campaigns on female exiles is more difficult. The disciplined fraternalism of the Society presupposed a strict gender divide. Indeed, in his publications, Frans Coster emphasised the masculine character of his enterprise, propagating a distinctly male type of piety. Supposedly feminine characteristics, such as 'fickleness and feebleness' had been one of the causes of religious dissent in the Low Countries. Re-educated, virile men were therefore needed for a refashioned Catholic Church.[34] Still, women could have their own reasons for associating themselves with members of the Society. Exiled nuns in Douai frequently stated that they went 'to church with the Jesuits' in town. Members of the order were also approached to provide references confirming the nuns' irreproachable lifestyle.[35] Hermann Weinsberg, who rented out his house to two female exiles from Delft, noted in his diary how 'jesuitical' they were: both women went to church early in the morning and fasted zealously.[36] It may well be that these women felt particularly attracted to elements of Jesuit piety. Catharina Daneels in Liège, for example, absorbed Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* and chose a Jesuit priest to be her spiritual mentor in exile.[37] But considering the general attitude of ambivalence towards travelling and displaced women, showing an interest in the Society of Jesus may also have served social purposes. A connection with these standard bearers of the Tridentine movement made it easier for single women in particular to prove their immaculate religiosity in public. Through the Jesuits these immigrants could regain something of their lost respectability. An association with the order may in fact have enabled exiled women to express themselves more freely and claim some sort of agency.[38]

Even those who did not formally join the Marian sodality inevitably encountered the spirit of militant Catholicism in Cologne and Douai. As will be shown in Chapter 5, both towns were key printing centres of international Counter-Reformation propaganda in the 1570s and

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[33] Brom, 'Stukken', 415–9. Compare Brom, *Archivalia in Italië*, I-I, 270; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 20–2. See Chapter 5.

[34] Porteman, 'Na 350 jaar', 202–69; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 143–4; Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender*, 224–32.

[35] ARAB, Audiëntie, 911, fo. 51–98, Reports Groningen, July 1583; fo. 188–201, Reports St Spermaille, August 1584.

[36] *Weinsberg*, 24 March 1578.

[37] According to her seventeenth-century biography. De Smidt, *Doorluchtich*, 9–16.

[38] Compare Chapter 3.

1580s.[39] Their productions included state-of-the-art catechisms by Peter Canisius, devotional paperbacks by Ignatius of Loyola and politicised commentaries on recent developments in the Netherlands and else-where.[40] Some of these publications were specifically aimed at émigré audiences. Sermons interacted with this printed material. The exile community may have lacked its own strangers' churches, but nothing prevented the refugees from choosing places of worship that catered to their specific needs. The convent of St Maximinen in Cologne, for example, proved to be a popular spiritual centre, 'where the Netherlanders gather each week to pray God Almighty for the welfare and peace of the Netherlands'.[41] The convent was located, characteristically, next to the Jesuit headquarters in the Maximinenstrasse. The exiled bishop of Leeuwarden Cunerus Petri, himself a fervent member of the sodality, preached here too.[42]

## A self-conscious community

Catholics in the Dutch revolt may have migrated because of their ortho-dox religious views, but the subsequent experience of flight and displace-ment also forced them to change and adapt those very religious views. Charismatic forms of clerical leadership and sociability in host towns channelled this gradual transformation of the exiles' religiosity.[43] While it is difficult to reconstruct the specifics of this process for individual men and women, it is clear that at least a significant part of the displaced community gradually 'confessionalised', adopting a more militant, politi-cised religious attitude. Further evidence for this development can be found in the way refugees presented themselves publicly. We have already seen how in the course of the Dutch revolt 'exile' took on positive con-notations among Catholics and Habsburg loyalists. Indeed, from the late 1570s, refugees in search of money, jobs or patronage referred explicitly to their exile credentials, of which they were 'proud'.[44] In the matriculation

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[39] For a critical assessment of the term 'propaganda' in this respect see Bloemendal and Van Dixhoorn, 'Early Modern', 282–4; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*; De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, esp. Chapter 6.

[40] Vermaseren, *De katholieke*; Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen'; Arndt, *Das Heilige*, 217–38, 266–74. See more about print culture in Chapter 5.

[41] Felix Archief, Notariaat, Egide Verbraecken, fo. 120r-v, Attestation Elizabeth Styen, 31 January 1585. See also Donnet, *Les Exilés*, 35.

[42] *Weinsberg*, 17 February 1580; Kuckhoff, *Die Geschichte*, 63–64, 135, 159. Compare the situation in Paris in Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*, 76–83.

[43] Compare Chatty, *Displacement*, 7–37; Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*.

[44] ARAB, Audiëntie, 1718/2, Lindanus to Don Juan, 24 July 1578; 1806/1, Lindanus to Farnese, 9 January and 10 April 1581; 1840/4, Various letters from exiles Jacques Ficq,

register of the University of Cologne some added they had been 'expelled by heretics' or 'driven out of *patria* because of the Catholic faith'.[45] Student Johannes Roorda from Friesland, who stayed at the Jesuit-run Tricoronatum College, wrote to his father how 'pleased' he was to be a child of Catholic parents who had preferred to leave and lose their possessions rather than their faith.[46]

Not only do such exercises in self-fashioning demonstrate how refugees gradually embraced a distinctive, Tridentine-inspired exile identity, but the very process of composing letters, poems and chronicles was crucial to the formation of this new self-image. When Maarten Donk published his treatise on the Eucharist in 1580, he duly listed all his titles and former jobs on the title page, including the notable fact that he had been exiled by heretics 'as many as three times'.[47] Some hard-line Catholics, such as sodality prefect Jan Gerritsz Stempelse, consciously signed their letters as 'exules', distinguishing themselves from those who had not gone into exile.[48] Since correspondence often circulated, was read aloud and even used for devotional purposes, it was an important vehicle in transmitting confessional zeal in a scattered religious community.[49] It is significant that some of this material has survived in family archives, with signs of intensive spiritual use. If 'exile' was at the heart of this new Catholic self-consciousness, it followed that the years when such flight took place acquired a spiritual meaning as well. In correspondence, Stempelse sometimes counted the years since he had been sent into exile. For bibliophiles Jacob Buyck and Willem van Mackinga, flight marked the beginning of a new intellectual journey. Each noted the year of his displacement in purchased books.[50]

In styling themselves the protagonists of an embattled yet rejuvenated Catholic order, refugees received support from Tridentine propagandists. Jesuit priests praised refugees as role models and recommended them for

Pierre Arentsoen, Willem Bonsen, Nicolaas Buyck, Jan Meeusz, Gerrit Gerritsz, Dirk Jan Deyman addressed to Farnese, 1580s; Brom and Hensen, *Romeinsche bronnen*, 281. Compare Bakelants, *La vie*, 251–484.

45 Keussen, Nyassi and Wilkes, *Die Matrikel*, 115–45.

46 Tresoar, Eysinga, 2954, Johannes Gerbranda van Roorda to Hans Roorda, 28 March 1594. See also Zijlstra, 'Studying Abroad'.

47 Duncanus, *Van het nieuwe sacrificium des Christendoms*, title page. Noordeloos, *Pastoor*, II, 78.

48 ARSI, Germaniae, Epp., 136–II, Jan Gerritsz Stempelse to the General, 9 August 1575 from Cologne; 137-I, Frans Coster to the General, 12 April 1576 from Cologne (including a note by Stempelse); 156, Jan Gerritsz Stempelse to the General, 20 and 31 January 1578 from Cologne; UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 455, Christiaen van Adrichem to Willem Lindanus, 23 May 1584 from Cologne.

49 Greengrass, 'Two Sixteenth-Century', 328–33; Walsham, 'Domme Preachers', 98–115.

50 UBA, Collectie Buyck; Gnirrep, 'De bibliotheek'; Hogeman, 'Over de verbanning', 189.

prebends and offices.[51] In 1577 the papal nuncio, Bartholomeus Porta, recorded that Jan Gerritsz Stempelse was now widely regarded as 'a living saint' in Cologne.[52] The evolving notion of the Catholic exile martyr was suitably exploited in burial monuments. At the church of St Andreas in Cologne an epitaph was erected to the memory of Johannes Drolshagen from Utrecht (d. 1581). The text reminded visitors how 'the Beggars clan of the Batavians drove him away from them into exile, and he fled to here, until all trouble would end.'[53] It seems that St Andreas became the centre of a distinctive exile cult. Wills from Antwerp elites in the city show a preference for the Dominican church or stipulate that funeral masses there should be read 'by a Netherlandish, expelled priest'.[54] In the 1590s, similar burial memorials and altars, evoking the heroic exile experience, would be installed in Kalkar, Emmerich, Douai and St Omer.[55] In a sense, these public monuments in satellite asylum towns institutionalised the informal exile networks that had emerged in the 1570s. They fashioned the scattered exile community as a cohesive and venerable force within the invigorated Catholic Church.

It is clear then, that exile had a unifying effect, creating new, imagined communities of faith.[56] In most of the refuge towns émigrés initially depended on existing family relationships, friendships and clientage. But once they started to organise themselves, the exiles established a new type of alliance that was grounded in a shared identity of heroic victimhood. Wills drawn up in Cologne include multiple references to gifts to 'fellow poor, expelled Netherlanders' and convent communities 'who have been living in exile for their faith'.[57] Such charitable bequests indicate a changed sense of group bonding among refugees and a shifting devotional agenda.[58] While displacement integrated previously disparate groups, the solidification of these ties also served as a force of social exclusion. For some émigrés, new religious affinities became more important than older family bonds. In exile in Cologne, a canon of St Baafs at

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[51] Compare letters in ARSI, Germaniae, Epp., 137-II, 138-II, 157; Brom and Hensen, *Romeinsche bronnen*, 280–2, 288, 293, 358, 419, 677–8, 706.

[52] Brom and Hensen, *Romeinsche bronnen*, 242. Compare Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*, 135–6.

[53] Keussen, 'Die drei Reisen', 41–42 (Gens tamen hunc a se Batavorum Geusica pellit. Et fugit hic, donec terminet omne malum).

[54] Felix Archief, Notariaat, Egide Verbraecken. In the Dom of Cologne a similar exile monument existed in honour of Cunerus Petri, exiled bishop of Leeuwarden. Keussen, 'Die drei Reisen', 51.

[55] See Chapter 7. De Werd, *St. Nicolaikirche*, 25–27; Dudok van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse burgers*, I, 87–109; Gnirrep, 'De bibliotheek'.

[56] Compare Terpstra, 'Imagined Communities', 222–5.

[57] Felix Archief, Notariaat, Egide Verbraecken, fo. 99, 101, 104, 105, 124.

[58] Compare Howell, 'Fixing Movables', 9–11; Ramsey, *Liturgy*.

Ghent rewrote his will, bequeathing his possessions to the daughter and son of his brother, but only on the condition 'that both will stay in the old apostolic catholic and roman faith'. Otherwise, the inheritance should benefit a Catholic seminary. If the canon's nephew and niece did not live up to the terms of the bequest, they could be restored as beneficiaries if their respective children returned to the Church of Rome.[59] Jacob Buyck in Emmerich showed the same uncompromising attitude when he bequeathed his precious library to 'someone of our blood who is Catholic'.[60] Exile had redefined the refugees' social world.

### The world of refugees

In a seminal essay, Heiko Oberman coined the phrase 'the reformation of the refugees' to explain developments in sixteenth-century Calvinism.[61] Among other things, Oberman argued that exile experiences had been instrumental in the construction and spread of Reformed Protestantism in Europe. John Calvin and his followers provided evangelical refugees of different strands with a clear blueprint for their church communities in exile. These guidelines taught them how to organise their congregations, how to interpret tricky matters of doctrine and how to install a system of church discipline. The latter served to fashion a sense of purity within the elect community. Well suited to the harsh conditions of displacement, Calvin's teachings were widely embraced by evangelical dissenters across Europe. From the 1540s onwards, Geneva served as the epicentre of a supranational network of correspondence and print, which reinforced a sense of solidarity among scattered groups of Reformed Protestants. Some scholars have dubbed this phenomenon International Calvinism.[62]

However illuminating this approach to Calvinism has been, it would be misleading to tie the notion of a 'refugee reformation' exclusively to developments in Reformed Protestantism. Heinz Schilling has recently compared the unifying and disciplining impact of exile among Calvinists to similar processes of confessionalisation among Sephardic Jews.[63] Such parallels are indeed implicit in the work of, among others, Miriam Bodian, who has shown how Portuguese conversos adopted a more radical Jewish

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[59] RAG, St. Baafs, K 8490 (10185), Will of Cornelis Sfolders [sic], 21 December 1584 at Cologne.
[60] De Bont, 'Het codicil', 265.     [61] Oberman, 'Europa Afflicta', 91–111.
[62] For an overview of this historiography see Benedict, *Christ's Churches*; Duke, Lewis and Pettegree, *Calvinism*; Grell, *Brethren*; Murdock, *Beyond Calvin*; Pettegree, *Emden*; Schilling, *Niederländische Exulanten*.
[63] Schilling, 'Christliche und jüdische', 407–37. Also compare Terpstra, 'Imagined Communities'; Schunka, 'Konfession'.

self-consciousness after their re-settlement in northern European towns, such as Amsterdam.[64] Local jurisdictions often forced these migrants to reorganise themselves as a group and reinvent their (crypto)Jewish identity. Charitable institutions and religious teaching furthered this spiritual transformation among Jews, in much the same way as they did in Calvinist environments. There is a lot of evidence to suggest that the Catholic exile community during the Dutch revolt went through a similar confessionalising process. While there are great gaps in our knowledge of Catholic migrations in Reformation Europe more generally, recent studies about English, Irish and French émigrés allow us to draw some specific cross-confessional parallels.[65] First, in Calvinist and Catholic exile communities local religious facilities were crucial in channelling the communal response to exile. Through charity, sociability and religious instruction, Reformed consistories in refugee towns actively promoted a type of disciplined confessionalism among its members. As we have seen, the Marian sodalities in Catholic exile bastions held similar objectives. Second, centres of asylum on both sides cemented contrasting world views as they became significant producers of confessional propaganda. Calvinist bases such as Geneva and Emden established powerful printing presses in the sixteenth century, inspiring the Catholic strongholds of Douai, Cologne and Paris to do the same.[66] Third, then, these towns were able to disseminate their agenda by acting as international training camps. Geneva and Heidelberg have long been known as nurseries for Reformed ministers across Europe. The Catholic seminaries at Douai, Reims, Leuven and Cologne would become the principal deliverers of missionary priests for the Dutch Republic and the British Isles.

Despite these striking similarities, the Calvinist and Catholic exile experience also differed in some respects. The evangelicals who escaped Habsburg persecution on the eve of the Dutch revolt were generally less well off, less well connected and less well educated, than their Catholic counterparts. Their inferior social background made Protestants even more dependent on the facilities of the stangers' churches. Paradoxically, these artisans and weavers may have adapted more easily to the hardships of exile. They were probably used to a hard life, whereas for the Catholic elites the experience of displacement and marginalisation was deeply traumatic.

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[64] Bodian, *Hebrews*; Bodian, 'Men of the Nation', 48–76. Also Israel, *European Jewry*, ch. 4; Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, 14–21, 57–98.

[65] Notably Braun, 'Katholische Konfessionsmigration'; Carroll, *Martyrs*, esp. 221–80; Descimon and Ruiz Ibáñez, *Les ligueurs*; García Hernán, *Ireland*; Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*; Highley, *Catholics*; Marshall, 'Religious Exiles'; Walker, *Gender and Politics*; Walsham, 'Domme Preachers'.

[66] For the Catholic exile printing press see Chapter 5.

Finally, it is important to note that there existed a dialectical tension between these opposing groups of refugees. We saw how the Catholic exodus in the Low Countries was partly incited by the return of Calvinist-inspired refugees after 1572. Victims of religious repression thus quickly turned into persecutors of dissident minorities themselves. Catholic and Protestant exile cultures effectively bred each other.

This cross-confessional perspective prompts some bigger questions about exile as an agent of change. Catholic reform in the early modern period has long been viewed through the lens of a triumphant, highly visible Catholic Church, whose development was closely related to that of the pre-modern state.[67] While the Church's efforts to enforce social discipline and doctrinal unity cannot be denied, the experiences of Catholic exiles show that this disciplinary offensive was not necessarily a top-down enterprise, imposed by institutions and elites on passive laymen and women. Nor was the renewal of Catholicism in these areas purely the result of spontaneous initiatives from 'below', as some revisionist scholarship has asserted. Developments in Catholic asylum towns, rather, resonate with the findings of Howard Louthan, Trevor Johnson and Judith Pollmann, who have seen the emergence of confessional identities as the outcome of a dynamic interaction between local clergy and the laity, particularly those who belonged to the urban middling sort.[68] The disruptive circumstances of exile proved particularly fit for such collaborative experiments 'from the middle'. In the urban Marian sodalities, for example, clergy and laity sought to form new, creative coalitions. In this way, exile communities demonstrate that a confessionalisation of minds was possible without the support of a strong bureaucratic state or ecclesiastical infrastructure.

In a different context, forced migration during the early modern period has been approached as an agent of economic change. Building on the Weberian idea that a Calvinist work ethic fuelled the growth of modern capitalism, historians have studied exile communities as laboratories of economic innovation. Max Weber's popular thesis has received much bad press among Reformation historians, who have generally dismissed correlations between a distinctive Calvinist 'psyche' and economic rationalisation.[69] What is more, if exile exerted comparable

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[67] Compare overviews in Reinhard and Schilling, *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung*; Hsia, *The World*; O'Malley, *Trent*.

[68] Louthan, *Converting Bohemia*; Johnson, *Magistrates*, esp. 9; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, esp. 201.

[69] A pioneering study of the 1970s is Schilling, *Niederländische Exulanten*. More recent contributions to the debate include Benedict, *Christ's Churches*, xix–xx, 328–9, 541–2; Grell, *Brethren*, esp. 16–8, 300–7.

effects in Calvinist and Catholic circles, it is difficult to see how it could serve as a cradle of capitalism only in the case of the former. This is not to suggest that religious migrations had no lasting economic consequences. The diasporas of early modern Calvinist and Jewish entrepreneurs undeniably engendered new trading networks, knowledge and commercial skills.[70] In a similar fashion, the years in Cologne strengthened the family bonds of exiled Antwerp merchants. Establishing themselves in the Rhineland may even have opened up new markets.[71] But there is little proof that their religious reorientation in exile coincided with the appropriation of a new 'capitalist' attitude, nor that these Catholic entrepreneurs had previously lacked business skills and an entrepreneurial spirit.

Drawing comparisons between opposing groups of religious refugees not only exemplifies the merits of the refugee-reformation thesis; it brings out its limitations too. Scholars of the Reformation have recently challenged the supposed uniformity of International Calvinism, emphasising instead its internal varieties and conflicts. Alastair Duke and Jesse Spohnholz have pointed to evangelical refugees who showed little enthusiasm for the confessional agenda of Reformed congregations. Because of a fixation in scholarship on the records of Calvinist-oriented institutions, unaffiliated exiles have been largely overlooked.[72] Patchy evidence from the Netherlands suggests that their numbers were significant though. Various Protestant 'libertines', such as the humanist polemicist Dirk Volckertsz Coornhert, the Amsterdam magistrate Cornelis Pietersz Hooft and the Utrecht priest Hubert Duifhuis, all resisted organised Calvinism during their years of exile during the Dutch revolt.[73] Some of them may even have embraced models of religious toleration during their stay in bi-confessional towns in the German Rhineland.[74] The forced migration of conversos from Spain and Portugal provoked a variety of responses, too. While there is a clear tendency towards (re)Judaisation among immigrants, this new religious identity could take many different forms. The adoption of more radical, exclusive forms of Sephardic Jewry was just one of many survival strategies. Several case studies have highlighted how multi-layered,

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[70] Grell, *Brethern*; Schilling, 'Christliche und jüdische'; Israel, *European Jewry*; Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, 207–26; Siebenhüner, 'Conversion', 8–18.
[71] Timmermans, *Patronen*, 47–55.
[72] Duke, *Reformation*, 269–93; Spohnholz, *The Tactics*, 11–33. Compare Pettegree, *Emden*, 147–87; Benedict, *Christ's Churches*, 533–46.
[73] On Coornhert: Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 90. On Hooft: Enno van Gelder, *De levensbeschouwing*. On Duifhuis: Kaplan, *Calvinists*.
[74] Spohnholz, *The Tactics*, 16–22.

ambiguous and flexible the religious identity of some (crypto)Jewish migrants could be.[75] Such contrasting examples from Protestant and Jewish circles are also pertinent for our understanding of the Catholic case. They raise questions about the cohesiveness of the scattered émigré population, the existence of other devotional traditions in asylum centres and the possibility of alternative responses to exile.

### Alternative responses

It is clear that not all refugees arrived at the kind of draconic conclusions, drawn by Jacob Buyck and his clique. Catholic group bonding in exile did not deter some refugees from maintaining relationships with those who did not share their religious views. Christiaen van Adrichem, for one, was a former priest from Delft who preached for the émigré community in Cologne. Fully integrated into the activist network of Willem Lindanus, Jan Gerritsz Stempelse and Caspar van der Cruyce, Van Adrichem also continued affectionate correspondence with his younger brother Claes, who was a deacon and alderman of the Reformed consistory of Delft.[76] The Catholic priest was grateful to his Calvinist brother for administering his part of the family estate, regularly arranged transports of merchandise from Cologne and sent Claes the latest maps from the Frankfurt book fair.[77] In their letters, his Calvinist relatives indicate they miss Christiaen greatly, expressing the hope that 'it would please God that you come and live in Delft.'[78] The Van Veen family from Leiden found similar solutions to their religious divisions. The revolt split the Van Veens religiously and geographically, but in 1584 the Catholic Otto van Veen ('Vaenius') composed a unified, imaginary family portrait.[79] *Alba amicorum*, popular social media for the sixteenth-century student, reveal that sons of Catholic families studying in Douai also stayed in touch with fellow countrymen with Protestant leanings.[80] These examples bring out

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[75] Siebenhüner, 'Conversion', 5–36; Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute*, 71–104; García-Arenal and Wiegers, *A Man of Three Worlds*, vii–xi, 21–52.

[76] UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 272, Registers of payments made to Christiaen van Adrichem, 1577–1584; 455, Christiaen van Adrichem to Willem Lindanus, 23 May 1594 from Cologne; 460, Will of Christiaen van Adrichem, 11 June 1585.

[77] NA, Van Adrichem, 133, Correspondence of Christiaen van Adrichem, 1580s; Abels and Wouters, *Nieuw en ongezien*, I, 280.

[78] UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 455, Jacob Adriaensz van Adrichem to Christiaen van Adrichem, 15 June 1582 from Delft.

[79] *Ketters en papen*, 178; Rogier, *Geschiedenis*, V, 1015. The flight of Cornelis van Veen to Antwerp in October 1572 is recorded in Felix Archief, Schepenbank, 330.

[80] Based on the collection of *alba amicorum* in the Royal Library, The Hague. Compare Thomassen, *Alba amicorum*; Zijlstra, 'Studying Abroad'.

conclusions in recent scholarship, which emphasise that practices of toleration and intoleration were not mutually exclusive. As Alexandra Walsham put it, 'we need to build into our analysis the insight that abstract hatred of a false religion as a system of thought was by no means incompatible with cordial relations with its human adherents.'[81] Catholic émigrés who were deprived of their houses and possessions may have felt that they just could not afford to abandon all contacts with heretical kin, friends and business partners. As we will see, dilemmas about loyalty, friendship and interconfessional relationships would remain divisive within the Catholic community in the following decades.[82]

Likewise, there are grounds to add many nuances to the unifying, integrating effects of exile. In some cases, forced migration fuelled long-existing tensions or sparked internal conflicts. Wouter Jacobsz's diary records the deep rifts within the refugee community in Amsterdam about the need to negotiate with the rebels in 1577–78.[83] Expelled religious communities seem to have been particularly prone to the dynamics of discord. Reports from the 1580s mention paralysing disputes about money, leadership and the question of whether going into exile had been such a good idea after all. Some respectable monastic foundations completely disintegrated as a result. The former Abbey of Ninove in Flanders is a case in point. In 1579 Catholic officials were shocked to discover that exile had not only brought the monks to poverty, but also to a break with the order's rule. In a breakdown of all discipline, the men were said to have been involved in numerous cases of fighting, plundering and debauchery.[84]

### Different directions

Such alternative responses add some shading to the image of the confessionalisation of refugees in Cologne and Douai. The descriptions of Wouter Jacobsz in Amsterdam raise more fundamental questions about the psychological consequences of exile. His extensive diary notes from 1572 to 1579 typically recall the desperation and misery among exiled Catholics, but show very little evidence of a subsequent shift towards

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[81] Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, 21.
[82] See Chapters 6 and 7. On interconfessional contacts more generally: Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 237–65; Kooi, *Calvinists*; Pollmann, *Religious Choice*.
[83] *DWJ*, II, 702–3.
[84] See examples in ARAB, Audiëntie, 908–911. The reports about Ninove are in 909, fo. 1–66. Discussed in Valvekens, *De Zuid-Nederlandsche*, 156–66. More examples in *DWJ*, I, 300; II, 669.

militant Catholicism. Reviewing the exodus in 1572, Wouter drew the single pessimistic conclusion that 'God has abandoned us.'[85] In the following months he continued to describe how men and women in Amsterdam were 'weeping' on the streets, 'uttering strange lamentations'.[86] More than three years later the mood had hardly changed. 'See in what distress the people lived here,' Wouter reminded his readers in 1576, 'so that you may give thanks to God if you live in another time.'[87] In a strikingly apocalyptic tone he analysed the spiritual impact of exile in purely negative terms. The refugees Wouter Jacobsz encountered just 'more and more disappear into themselves'.[88]

In Amsterdam, it seems, exile merely generated an atmosphere of general defeatism. Local Catholics were at a loss to understand why God was punishing the faithful so harshly. 'Why do you not protect your people,' Wouter asked, 'and why do you not punish the wicked?'[89] The possible answers to this pressing question were vigorously debated:

Different opinions and views were voiced about the obstacles in our path and why God Almighty had suffered us to be defeated now. . . . the most reputable pointed to the sins which God knew had been committed, and still are being committed, by the army as a whole, by the officers as well as the soldiers, indeed by us all. . . . We failed to see that the blame for all these troubles lay with ourselves.[90]

In attributing the causes of their misery to the moral degeneration of the Catholics themselves, the refugees' arguments rested on a popular interpretation of the troubles in the Low Countries more generally. We saw how the passivity of many Catholics in the early phases of the revolt was underpinned by the shared belief that heresy was a punishment of God for the sins of a decadent society. The war in the prosperous Low Countries was a form of divine retribution.[91] 'Lord, it is true,' Wouter Jacobsz told himself time and again, 'we confess our error to you, our sins are manifold, we have transgressed your commandments.'[92] Exile, according to this line of thought, was God's revenge for the sins of his people, a view that also resonated with biblical and Jewish readings of diaspora.[93] While this message may have encouraged Catholics to contemplate their own shortcomings, it did little to develop strategies to liberate themselves from the miseries of exile. Their fate was in God's

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[85] *DWJ*, I, 4, 13.   [86] *DWJ*, I, 131, also 319.   [87] *DWJ*, II, 589–90.
[88] *DWJ*, I, 233. For an analysis of the diary see Van Nierop, *Treason*, 180–5; Spaans, 'Catholicism and Resistance', 157–9.
[89] *DWJ*, I, 51.   [90] *DWJ*, I, 166–7.
[91] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 57–67; Spaans, 'Catholicism and Resistance', 157–9.
[92] *DWJ*, I, 51.
[93] Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*; Cunningham and Grell, *Four Horsemen*, 151–69, 222–7.

hands. It is typical that refugees like Wouter Jacobsz discerned hopeful signs only in changes in the weather. After all, these were believed to reveal God's providence.[94]

No less angry and appalled than their co-religionists in Cologne or Douai, Catholic refugees in Amsterdam lacked the appetite of their peers for Tridentine militancy. What factors can explain this discrepancy? Comparing the availability of printed media, clerical leadership and social facilities in different centres of asylum helps to provide an answer to this question. We have seen how in Cologne and Douai refugees received spiritual consolation in Jesuit-led confraternities, which infused them with innovative ideas and gave them instruments to organise themselves as a group. A beleaguered town like Amsterdam clearly lacked such supportive infrastructure. Catholic culture there was much more traditional and the local media landscape far less advanced. Notably Amsterdam lacked a Jesuit college and with a population of about 25,000 it had only two parish churches at its disposal. Availability of print from elsewhere was limited during the devastating war of the 1570s.[95] The local authorities did make some effort to forge a sense of urban unity, for example by organising occasional processions, but Wouter Jacobsz had remarkably little to say about them in his diary. Parish priests Jacob Buyck and Maarten Donk, both graduates from Leuven and familiar with recent Tridentine teachings, seem to have tried to rejuvenate Catholic piety by setting up a communal prayer club. But since its spiritual agenda accorded with Wouter Jacobsz's analysis of the origins of exile, this initiative did nothing to energise refugees or to fashion a new Catholic self-consciousness.[96]

In the nearby safe haven of Utrecht, the situation was comparable. Although the town had a rich ecclesiastical infrastructure, including the seat of an archbishop, it did not engage much with its refugee population. At most, the local authorities sought to channel and control public opinion. After the fall of Haarlem in 1573 they erected some public displays, decorating buildings with mottos and lighting the town hall by

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[94] For example in *DWJ*, 212. See also Bor, *Oorsprongk*, I, 910; Opmeer, *Martelaars-boek*, II, 298. Interpretations in Schama, *The Embarrassment*, 133, 137; Egmond, 'De aanspra-kelijkheid', 11–27.

[95] See the analysis in Van Nierop, *Treason*; Van Nierop, 'Van wonderjaar', 465–76. Amsterdam printers did produce some books about martyrdom and the war during the 1570s. We also know that several Amsterdam citizens, including parish priest Jacob Buyck and Sybrant Occo, owned sizeable libraries. UBA, Collectie Buyck; De Bont, 'Meester Jacob Buyck'.

[96] Members were expected to pray at least one hour a week to avert the dangers that threatened the Catholic faith. Albertingk Thijm, 'Een zeldzaam gebedenboekje', 311–12; Noordeloos, *Pastoor*, I, 53; Gnirrep, 'De bibliotheek', 337–38.

night; an effigy of William of Orange was burned in public.[97] But there is little evidence that these top-down initiatives invigorated the émigré community or were met with much local enthusiasm. As Monica Stensland has shown, official communications largely focused on the message of obedience, stressing the goodness of the present Habsburg regime.[98] For struggling refugees, such narratives offered little consolation nor trust in the future. The only occasion immigrants were explicitly called upon in Utrecht was in December 1574, when they were compelled to help in the defence of the town.[99]

The royalist stronghold Groningen provides a final, illuminating counterfactual case. From 1580, the town was the foremost Catholic bastion in the north, accommodating large numbers of mostly Frisian priests, royalist office-holders and their families.[100] We know that the dividing lines between Protestantism and Catholicism had long been fluid in the northern provinces.[101] Groningen's isolated position, being virtually surrounded by enemy territory between 1580 and 1594, further frustrated Tridentine-inspired initiatives, including the implementation of a proper diocesan structure. Traditional rivalry with the 'Ommelanden' countryside had a paralysing effect too. During the years of civil war in the 1580s, regular contact with the Habsburg government and Roman officials was difficult and the supply of Catholic printed media must have been erratic at best. Military defence received priority over the investment in religious facilities.[102]

Hence Groningen, likewise, lacked supporting facilities that could assist in mobilising its refugee community. Interestingly, this changed over the course of the 1580s. Possibly inspired by the promising results in places such as Cologne, Douai and St Omer, Alexander Farnese pressed the Groningen authorities in 1583 and again in 1586 to establish a Jesuit college. Several city fathers seem to have been persuaded. They explained to the provincial-general of the order that 'it is our task to preserve our town for the Catholic King, and we are convinced your Society will be of great help to this end.'[103] Funding proved a continuous problem, though, and when the first Jesuit priest finally settled in 1588 the

[97] UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 664, Notes regarding decorations and festivities in Utrecht, 1573.
[98] Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 55–70.
[99] UA, Stadsarchief Utrecht, 13, Resoluties raad, 29 December 1574.
[100] Their numbers diminished after the outbreak of plague in Groningen in 1580–1581. See Hoogland, 'De Friesche vlugtelingen'; Hogeman, 'Over de verbanning'.
[101] See the classic study of Woltjer, *Friesland*.
[102] Schroor and Knottnerus, 'De Opstand', 124–51; Van Nierop, 'De Groninger burgeroorlog', 41–6; Bergsma, *Tussen gideonsbende*, 445–7.
[103] Quoted in Spijker, 'De jezuïeten', 141.

local community was disappointed to discover that he spoke no Dutch. With the arrival of Holland-born Adrianus Arboreus three years later, the situation improved.[104] Small in number, the Jesuits in Groningen embarked on a campaign that characteristically focused on education, disciplined piety and, crucially, lay participation. In the allocated St Walburg Church, the Society held militant preaching sessions, reportedly drawing large audiences. Spectacular, Italian-inspired works of art brought a new type of devotional propaganda to Groningen.[105] Established measures to successfully engage the laity, such as public book burnings of heterodox publications, were introduced as well. The appointment of the local Dominican prior Arnold Vijlen as vicar-general in 1589 gave another boost to the Catholic rejuvenation project. It appears that the Frisian exiles were particularly eager to involve themselves with this new, combative religiosity. Town secretary Johan Julsing remarked how 'the Frisians' in the town consciously aligned with the Jesuits. During the siege of 1594 the émigrés and the Society lobbied jointly against a possible peace treaty with the rebels.[106] Recognising their agency, Farnese's officials and the Catholic countess of Aremberg had several committed exiles appointed to (clerical) jobs in the later 1580s and early 1590s.[107]

But these strategies to engage the exiles could also backfire. Johan Julsing pointed out that the 'novelties' introduced by the Society of Jesus were met with suspicion by some traditional local Catholics, who resisted the 'foreign' and top-down character of many reforms. The Jesuits' close association with the displaced Frisian population in Groningen increased divisions.[108] On 23 July 1594, rebel forces seized Groningen. The following day a train of Catholic loyalists left the town, including Arnold Vijlen and three Jesuit priests. They reportedly smuggled out precious relics and church silver under their clothes.[109] The Counter-Reformation experiment in Groningen thus ended prematurely. But even its embryonic development showed what could be

[104] Funds for a Jesuit seminary were typically taken from the confiscated goods of rebels. Alting, *Diarium*, 732; Schroor and Knottnerus, 'De Opstand', 140; Spijker, 'De jezuïeten', 139.
[105] *Ketters en papen*, 180–1.
[106] Julsing, *Het geheime dagboek*, 158–9; Alting, *Diarium*, 840, 845.
[107] ARAB, Audiëntie, 2552, Appointments and gifts for Johan Roorda, 1584; Tresoar, Eysinga, 2972, 2979, Correspondence of Frisian exiles with Farnese. Schroor and Knottnerus, 'De Opstand', 139–40; Alting, *Diarium*, 640.
[108] Julsing, *Het geheime dagboek*, 103–4; Spijker, 'De jezuïten', 152; Schroor and Knottnerus, 'De Opstand', 140.
[109] Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 134; Schroor and Knottnerus, 'De Opstand', 154; Spijker, 'De jezuïeten', 161–2.

achieved by the application of inventive clerical leadership that capitalised on the exiles' spirit of resentment.

### The dynamics of exile

Displacement was a formative experience for Catholic refugees, but the reactions it provoked varied. Examples from dissimilar towns show how local religious infrastructures conditioned the way sixteenth-century refugees negotiated their exile and articulated a sense of their condition. Printed media and new forms of Jesuit sociability encouraged émigrés in Cologne and Douai to reinvent themselves and explore Tridentine strands of Catholicism. Counterfactual evidence from Amsterdam, Utrecht and Groningen in fact confirms the guiding role that such facilities could play. A confessionalisation of minds was therefore not the inevitable outcome of exile experience. It is notable that contemporaries also identified the significance of local institutions in this regard. Willem Lindanus was convinced that the Marian sodality in Cologne had been instrumental in triggering collective Catholic action. In Amsterdam, Wouter Jacobsz characteristically lamented the absence of support networks, explaining that exiles 'did not know where to turn for consolation'.[110]

It is important to note that Marian confraternities and Tridentine media did not simply transform traditional Catholics into uniform Counter-Reformation agents. They rather helped to galvanise a process of spiritual renewal, which inspired many refugees to rethink their religious world views. Exile towns were spiritual laboratories where new conceptions of the revolt were conceived, coalitions between clergy and laity were tested and refugees experimented with different forms of group bonding. In Cologne, Douai and St Omer, the years of displacement clearly served as a catalyst for religious radicalisation, making exiles more receptive to the doctrines and reforms of the Tridentine movement. The once-criticised agenda of the Council of Trent came to be accepted as suitable guidelines for these Netherlandish expatriates. The outcomes of this development will be explored in Chapter 5, which delves into the plans, plots and propaganda of the exiles themselves.

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[110] *DWJ*, I, 319; Brom, 'Twee geschriften', 296–99.

# 5    International Catholicism

### The martyred church

Writing was a preferred coping mechanism for sixteenth-century exiles. Christaen van Adrichem in Cologne used the tradition of the martyrology to interpret the great upheavals of his time. A soberly decorated manuscript contains the calendars he composed, filled with saints and lists of early Christian martyrs [Fig. 6]. Van Adrichem's presentation of these officially recognised role models of the church was followed by what he called 'De novis martyribus': an account of the new martyrs. Victims of recent rebel violence in the Low Countries were added to the register of venerable 'imitators of Christ'.[1] Van Adrichem's integration of old and new martyrdom was remarkable but not unconventional. All religious denominations in Reformation Europe sought to frame and memorialise their particular martyrs by portraying them as the latest participants in a centuries-old Christian tradition.[2] For Van Adrichem, such a cyclical reading of history also helped him to make better sense of his personal suffering and that of fellow Catholics in the Netherlands. The exercise confirmed his conviction that God was firmly on the Catholic side. Van Adrichem found additional proof for this belief in stories about spectacular miracles that had recently been recorded in Protestant Holland. In the margins of his *Martyrologium*, he added a stunning example of divine intervention that purportedly transpired during the gruesome murder of nineteen Franciscan priests at Brielle in 1572.[3]

Van Adrichem's Cologne-made manuscript exemplifies how the world view of refugees was at once narrowed *and* broadened during

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[1] UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 456, Martijrologium by Christiaen van Adrichem, *c.*1575–1581.
[2] Burschel, *Sterben und Unsterblichkeit*, 197–262; Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*.
[3] UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 456, Martijrologium by Christiaen van Adrichem, *c.*1575–1581, fo.119v.
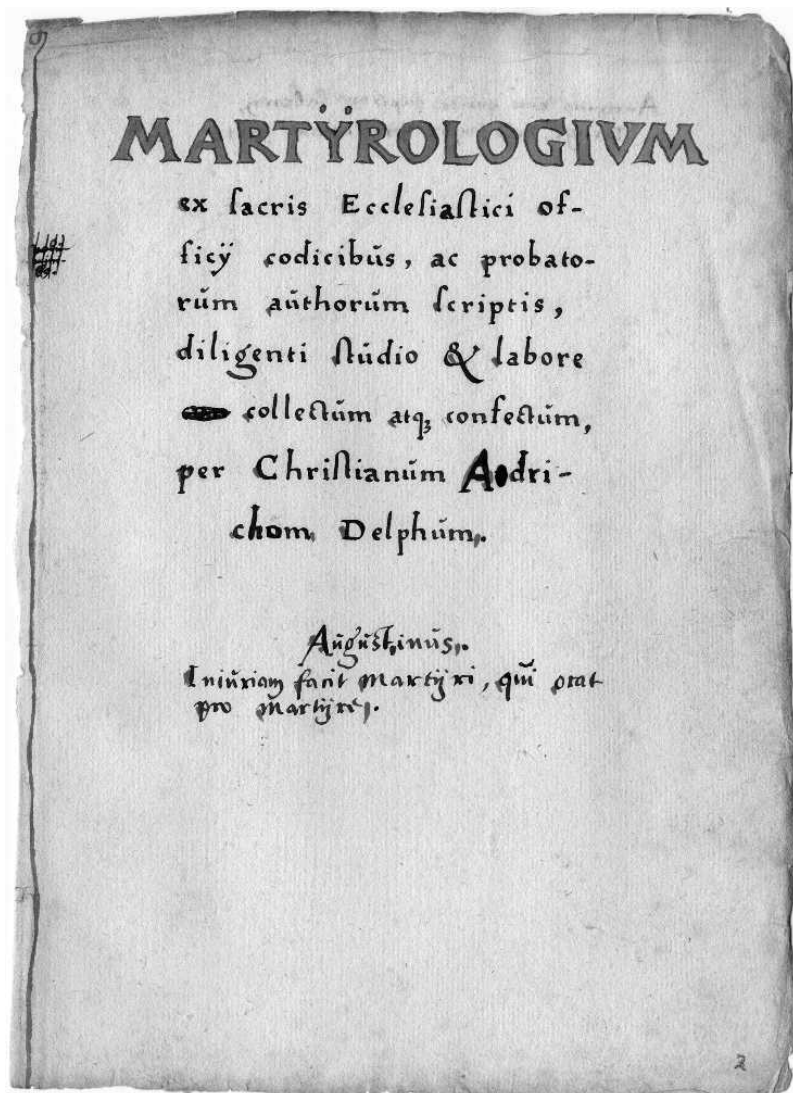
Figure 6 Title page of Christiaen van Adrichem, *Martyrologium*, 1575–81. Het Utrechts Archief.

exile. His overview of Catholic victims of the war, suggestively illustrated with blood-red letters, expressed a sense of Catholic superiority and registered deeply felt anger about Protestant atrocities. Indeed, martyrologies of the later sixteenth century are prime examples of the

militant Catholicism that thrived in exile circles.[4] Van Adrichem's *Martyrologium* simultaneously reveals the extent to which this combative Catholic world had become internationalised. Not only did the exile-author draw suggestive connections between murdered priests in rebel Holland and victims of barbarian persecution more than a thousand years earlier, he also intermingled Netherlandish and recent English examples of religious war crimes. Notably, his list included the martyrdom in London of the Jesuit priest Edmund Campion who in 1581 had been executed by the Protestant Elizabethan regime. Van Adrichem's view of Catholic suffering as a supranational phenomenon must have been informed by his stays in cosmopolitan refugee centres. More specifically, it echoed the message of printed polemics, produced in large quantities in Cologne, Douai and Paris in the 1580s, that stressed the need for a pan-European Counter-Reformation movement.[5] Van Adrichem did his own bit by composing his account of heroic Catholic victimhood in the *lingua franca* of Latin, specifying on the title page that the book was intended 'for his friends'. In negotiating his exile, the Delft-born priest sought to connect with an international audience of co-religionists.

Van Adrichem's writings remind us that the 'Counter-Reformation of the refugee' was not a specifically Netherlandish phenomenon, nor was it unique to Cologne or Douai. Both asylum towns were well-connected international hubs. In places such as St Omer, Reims and Douai, refugees from the rebel Netherlands mixed with Catholic exiles from the British Isles. Displaced communities in these towns also shared access to devotional books and polemical literature from internationally oriented printing houses. Many émigrés attended sermons given by well-travelled Jesuit priests. In the German Rhineland, as well as in northern France, refugees also became familiar with the Catholic activism of supporters of the prince-archbishop Ernest of Bavaria and the powerful dukes of Guise. Despite these various interconnections, there have been few attempts to understand the rise of Tridentine militancy around 1580 as a transnational enterprise.[6] This lacuna in modern scholarship is all the more remarkable because scholars of International Calvinism and Jewish diasporas have long highlighted

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[4] Arblaster, *Antwerp*; Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*, 84–109; Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, esp. 287–314; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 28–33, 55–8

[5] Parker, *The Grand Strategy*, 96–7; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 44–50; Walsham, 'Domme Preachers', 79–100.

[6] But note efforts made in Arblaster, *Antwerp*, 23–34; Carroll, *Martyrs*; Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*; Walsham, 'Domme Preachers'.

the significance of supranational networks in this period.[7] What, then, did the Catholic exile equivalent look like?

Mapping the culture of International Catholicism is a challenge because of the sheer size and scattering of sources. Rather than purporting to offer a comprehensive overview, we seek to assess how Netherlandish exiles engaged in international networks of correspondence, contributed to communal propaganda campaigns and participated in conspiracy schemes. This will enable us to appreciate how seemingly disparate conflicts in late sixteenth-century Europe became increasingly interconnected in the Catholic exile mindset.

### News and correspondence

From the start Catholic refugees in the Dutch revolt exchanged their thoughts and experiences through letters, stories and songs. Wouter Jacobsz, for example, was frequently informed in Amsterdam about the situation in other Catholic safe havens such as Utrecht, Cologne or Antwerp. In his own enclave news related to exiles could usually be heard in the Dam square area and at the 'Paalhuys' near the harbour. Booksellers and post messengers were also based in and around these information hotspots.[8] Much about this predominantly oral news culture remains uncertain, yet surviving letters offer a glimpse into the range of the exiles' connections. From Cologne, for example, the canons of St Baafs of Ghent regularly kept their fellow canons at Douai up to date about stories from the Netherlands and recent Catholic publications.[9] High-profile refugees, such as Jan Gerritsz Stempelse, Sasbout Vosmeer and Willem Lindanus, maintained extensive networks of correspondence. As self-styled figureheads of the scattered exile community, they acted as information brokers, sharing books, distributing pamphlets and connecting exiles through their various writings.[10]

This culture of letter writing did much more than provide refugees with the latest news. By framing events, newsletters constituted powerful

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[7] Benedict, *Christ's Churches*; Duke, Lewis and Pettegree, *Calvinism*; Grell, *Brethren*; Israel, *European Jewry*; Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*.

[8] Deen, 'Handwritten Propaganda'; Dunthorne, *Britain*, 1–29; Lesger, *The Rise*, 243–9; Van Nierop, 'And Ye Shall Hear', 72–85.

[9] RAG, St Baafs, K 12165 (1030), K 9192/2 (1030A), K 12130 (1033), K 12542 (10184), Correspondence 1579–1584.

[10] Examples in ARSI, Germaniae, Epp., 134–138, 152–165; Flandro-Belgica, Epp., 1–2; HAK, Jesuiten, A17-A19; ARAB, Audiëntie, 588–589, 1787/1, 1806/1; UA, OKKN, Apostolisch vicarissen, 1, 439; Verzamelde stukken, 455, 469; NA, Van Adrichem, 132–149; Tresoar, Eysinga, 2953–2980.

vehicles for group bonding and the transmission of confessionalised world views. Stempelse, for example, tended to combine heartbreaking accounts of the ordeal of exile with upbeat stories about spiritual renewal within the Marian confraternity. Willem Lindanus likewise blended his narrative of the situation in the Netherlands with shocking descriptions of violence and debauchery by rebels. His lengthy expressions of fury about Protestant iconoclasm were usually followed by consoling messages involving divine miracles and Catholic martyr-dom.[11] The inclusion of eyewitness accounts in correspondence added credibility to the news provided. Lindanus' careful employment of emotions was an established didactic technique, too, intended to incite spiritual reflection among readers. It is telling that Jesuit writings contain similar epistolary conventions. We know that their letters were supposed to adhere to prescribed formats, which dictated how information should be structured and listed a catalogue of virtues that were to be emphasised.[12]

It follows that this type of correspondence should not be regarded as 'private', despite the inclusion of personalised opening phrases and signatures. It was common practice to circulate, read out and collect letters. To reinforce their evangelising potential some correspondence was later published. This strategy was also used to discredit the enemy, for example by disseminating (forged) letters of William of Orange.[13] Finally, the very regularity of stories about martyrdom and miracles in the exiles' correspondence suggests that some epistles were created for devotional purposes.[14] As spiritual memorabilia, they provided an alternative form of pastoral care. By channelling the news, offering consolation and connecting detached émigrés, the epistolary network thus compensated for the loss of contacts and facilities at home. Forced migration in the Dutch revolt may have affected established networks of parishes, families and friends, but it also fostered the construction of new, imagined communities of faith, separated by distance but tied through webs of correspondence.[15]

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[11] Brom and Hensen, *Romeinsche bronnen*, 265; Van Beuningen, *Wilhelmus Lindanus*, 16–7, 189–194.

[12] Friedrich, 'Government', 544–52; Greengrass, 'Two Sixteenth-Century', 325–37; Walsham, 'Miracles', 782–3.

[13] Compare Deen, 'Handwritten Propaganda', 217–25.

[14] They also formed the basis for the handwritten martyrologies that Pieter Opmeer and Christiaen van Adrichem composed during their exile. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 274–314; Nolet, 'De historische waarheid'; Vermaseren, 'De bronnen', 93–108. Also compare Spaans, 'Catholicism and Resistance', 156–7.

[15] Greengrass, 'Two Sixteenth-Century, 337; Terpstra, 'Imagined Communities', 222–5; Walsham, 'Translating Trent', 292–310.

### International interactions

This interconnected exile world was international in scope. We saw how members of expelled monastic orders often travelled to bases of their congregation abroad. A number of painters and sculptors, who moved from the troubled Low Countries to Cologne and Rome, found artistic inspiration in foreign circles.[16] Other refugees sent petitions to officials in Rome, Brussels and Madrid. Their connections with Jesuits broadened horizons, too. Above all, the world of the Netherlandish émigrés was internationalised through interactions with English Catholics. Since the accession of Queen Elizabeth in 1558, the Low Countries had been a favourite refuge for Catholics who opposed Parliament's new religious settlement.[17] On the eve of the Dutch revolt, several Netherlandish towns had accommodated convents of English religious. Some English exiles had received prebends from the cathedrals of Cambrai, Tournai and St Omer, or received appointments at the universities of Leuven and Douai.[18] The subsequent turmoil of the revolt effectively exiled many of these English expatriates yet again. From the late 1570s, some regrouped in St Omer and Douai, and others moved to northern France. These areas were simultaneously confronted with an influx of Netherlandish refugees.

Some historians have argued that despite these overlapping experiences, the exchange between Catholic émigrés of different nationalities was limited. They have cited as evidence the hostilities between English, Irish and Scottish expatriates, who each tended to establish their own institutions on the Continent.[19] Studies of relocated English convents have noted an obsession with 'Englishness' among their members. In the words of Claire Walker: 'many women saw themselves primarily as members of the English Catholic community, and only secondly as members of the universal

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16  Painter Anthonis Blocklandt from Delft is a case in point. His move in 1572 has generally been seen as part of his travels to Italy, but archival sources clearly state that Blocklandt was regarded as a 'fugitive' by the rebel regime. His property was appropriated. He returned to Delft in December 1576. NA, Rekenkamer ter Auditie, 4544, fo. 8r; Grafelijkheidsrekenkamer, 683, fo. 4r; EAD, Oud Archief Delft, 388, List of returned refugees, 1576–1580. For artists in Cologne see Veltman, 'Keulen als toevluchtsoord' (which does not distinguish between Protestant and Catholic exiles); Filedt Kok, Halsema-Kubes and Kloek, *Kunst voor de beeldenstorm*, 419–61; Scholten, 'Willem van Tetrode', 53–9.

17  Arblaster, 'The Southern Netherands', 123–35; Balsamo, 'Les catholiques', 93–107; Dunthorne, *Britain*, 140–51; Guilday, *The English Catholic Refugees*; Marshall, 'Religious Exiles'; Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, 177–88.

18  Duffy, 'William Allen'; Guilday, *The English Catholic Refugees*, 43–5, 58, 138–40; Highley, *Catholics*, 25–7; Loomie, *Spanish Elizabethans*, 240–64; Schoutens, *Geschiedenis*, 59. For Scottish examples see Chadwick, 'The Scots College', 575–81.

19  Chadwick, 'The Scots College', 575–81; García Hernán, *Ireland and Spain*, 244–6; Highley, *Catholics*, 140–1. See also Arblaster, 'The Southern Netherlands', 123–38.

Catholic church.'[20] This inward-looking mentality can also be gauged from their writings, which emphasise the enclosed and isolated lives of many English religious.[21] But a reliance on this type of source material can create a distorted picture. Katy Gibbons, for example, found more varied modes of interaction among the English Catholic community in Paris. Lay exiles in the French capital generally cultivated connections with co-religionists from their homeland, but they also attempted to interest local French Catholics and Spanish officials in their cause.[22] In letters to the Roman Curia, English exiles likewise emphasised their membership in the universal church. Some even asserted their allegiance to the Habsburg monarchy. After all, a considerable number of English expatriates in the Low Countries profited directly from 'Spanish' patronage. Back home, Protestant polemicists were eager to accuse the Catholic émigrés on the Continent of becoming 'hispaniolised'.[23] Hence, the exiles' English self-fashioning may partly have been a rhetorical strategy to counter these accusations. As will be shown, many displaced Catholics – clergy and laity alike – felt stranded in a no-man's-land and had to negotiate among competing conceptions of Catholic identity.

Exiles from the British Isles and the Low Countries inevitably crossed paths. In centres of asylum near the French borders they made use of the same facilities and had access to each other's networks and publications. English exiles were clearly seen as inspiring pioneers by their Netherlandish counterparts. In his *Institutio Necessaria*, Johannes Costerius in Douai explained that the brave decision of English Catholics to leave their country offered an admirable model for hesitant Catholics in the Netherlands to follow.[24] Delft priest Cornelis Musius, who would be executed by rebel forces in 1572, reportedly carried with him paintings of the English martyrs Thomas More and John Fisher.[25] The presence of English exiles in the Low Countries in the 1560s resulted in friendships that were later reinforced by a common experience of exile. The academic bureaucrat Jean Vendeville, for one, was on close terms with one of the leaders of the English émigré community, William Allen. In 1567 the two men travelled together to Rome. Their collaboration was marked by the foundation of an English college at Douai the following year.[26] For Willem Lindanus the world of exile was, by definition, a transnational one. Convinced that a

[20] Walker, *Gender and Politics*, 183. Also Bowden, 'The English Convents'.
[21] Highley, *Catholics*; Questier, *Catholicism*; Shell, *Catholicism*.
[22] Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*; Gibbons, 'A Reserved Place'.
[23] Highley, *Catholics*, 151–87; Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, 178–86.
[24] Costerius, *Institutio*, ch. 3.    [25] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 125–26, 312.
[26] Duffy, 'William Allen'; Lottin, *Lille*, 51–3; Possoz, *Jean Vendeville*, 42–50; Soen, 'The Loyal Opposition', 49. See also Allen's letters from this period in Knox, *Letters and Memorials*. The college moved to Reims in 1578 and returned to Douai in 1593.

pan-European approach was needed to confront the problem of heresy, he kindled Anglo–Netherlandish alliances. To set the right example, Lindanus made the English Jesuit John Gibbon his chaplain.[27]

Relationships between exiles of different nationalities intensified when they relied on the same patron. Initially the Habsburg government seems to have been overwhelmed by the expanding refugee crisis in northern Europe. The papacy in Rome also paid surprisingly little attention to Catholic refugees. From the late 1570s, however, Philip II and his governor in the Netherlands Don Juan showed a growing interest in the exile cause. This never resulted in a coherent exile policy, but refugees of different stripes were gradually integrated into Habsburg patronage schemes. More specifically, the king distributed pensions, alms and offices to Catholics who had escaped from the British Isles, his own dominions in the Netherlands as well as civil war France. In the 1590s these groups of refugees mixed at the Habsburg court in Brussels.[28] Recognising their transnational potential, Irish and English troops were incorporated into Philip II's armies.[29] In France, the dukes of Guise stimulated a similar sense of international Catholic solidarity. As leaders of the militant Catholic party in the French civil wars, the dukes had strong bases in the borderland areas of Picardy and Lorraine as well as in Paris and Reims, which made their territories preferred destinations for refugees from England and the Netherlands alike. Henry and Louis of Guise accommodated a number of English noblemen in their household, organised dinner parties and communal processions and subsidised the English seminary in Reims.[30] In 1584, their Catholic League formed a strategic alliance with Philip II. In this way, the international exile community was at the heart of an emerging Catholic union, determined to annihilate Protestantism in northern Europe.

### The exile printing press

The notion of a Catholic International was undergirded by print publications, much of which were produced in refugee towns. Catholic exile print

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[27] Theiner, *Annales*, II, 423–5; Brom, 'Stukken', 426–9; Spiertz, 'Wilhelmus Lindanus', 211; Walsham, 'Domme Preachers', 84.

[28] Arblaster, *Antwerp*, 36–45; Descimon and Ruiz Ibáñez, *Les ligueurs*; Duerloo, *Dynasty*, 164–5, 184–5; Guilday, *The English Catholic Refugees*, 7–19; Loomie, *Spanish Elizabethans*. Philip II received encouragement from Pope Gregory XIII. Tellechea Idigoras, *El Papado*, II, 12–3, 79.

[29] Examples in Renold, *Letters*, 71; García Hernán, *Ireland and Spain*, 239–46; Parker, *Army of Flanders*, 36–7; Schüller, *Die Beziehungen*, 109–17, 127–32, 198–208.

[30] Balsamo, 'Les catholiques', 94–9; Carroll, *Martyrs*, 225, 242–55; Constant, *La ligue*, 150–1; Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*, 68–9; Harrie, 'The Guises', 43–58.

culture has not received the scrutiny its Calvinist counterpart has enjoyed.[31] It is a historiographical commonplace to associate the evangelical exploitation of the printing press with Protestantism. According to this traditional view, the Church of Rome was largely hostile towards popularised religious debate and preferred to repress its dissemination through censorship and the Inquisition. In the past decade this caricatured image has successfully been challenged.[32] Following a general reappraisal of the Catholic book, Alexandra Walsham, Christopher Highley and Katy Gibbons have uncovered significant production by English exiles in places such as Douai, St Omer and Paris.[33] In so doing they have highlighted the impact of print on the survival of Catholicism in the British Isles. Devotional literature, liturgical manuals and polemical broadsheets were exported in large quantities from asylum bastions on the Continent. They fulfilled, as well as channelled, the spiritual needs of Catholic men and women in England. 'There is nothing which helps and has helped and will protect in the future and spread our cause so much', claimed the Jesuit Robert Persons optimistically to the Society's general in Rome in 1581.[34] Yet the exile publishing industry did not only cater to this underground Catholic market in England, it also poured out books that were pitched at local émigrés. Thomas Hide and William Allen, among others, addressed the challenges of displacement in their writings.

The Netherlandish émigrés were just as eager to explore the potential of the print. By the 1570s, Cologne had already established itself as a leading centre of Tridentine publishing.[35] The firm of Maternus Cholinus was one of its principal producers. His list of more than 250 titles included Counter-Reformation bestsellers by Peter Canisius, Ignatius of Loyola and Stanislaus Hosius. Closely associated with the Society of Jesus, Cholinus also published the *Libellus sodalitatis* of Frans Coster. Small wonder that the local exile community sollicited his services. B.A. Vermaseren has already remarked in his ground-breaking study that high-profile refugees, including Cunerus Petri, Petrus S. Audomarus and Willem Lindanus, published their works with Cholinus.[36] Most of these exile productions were treatises in Latin, apparently intended for an educated audience of hard-line Catholics. The

[31] Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution*, 164–208; Gilmont, *La Réforme*; Kingdon, *Geneva*; Pettegree, *Emden*, 87–108.
[32] Compare Hsia, *The World*, ix, 172–86; Pettegree, 'Catholic Pamphleteering', 109–26.
[33] Walsham, 'Domme Preachers'; Highley, *Catholics*; Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*, 84–112. Also Dillon, *The Construction*; Greengrass, 'Two Sixteenth-Century'; Shell, *Catholicism*.
[34] Quoted in Walsham, 'Domme Preachers', 102.
[35] Arndt, *Das Heilige*, 217–74; Heal, *The Cult*, 207–61.
[36] Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 9–10, 44, 85–6; Knappert, 'Petrus Audomarus'.

polemical agenda in all these publications was virtually identical. The authors generally advocated confessional uniformity under a single Catholic king, rejected concessions to heretics, accused rebel leader William of Orange of deceit and underscored the need for Catholic spiritual regeneration. Perhaps most innovative in his exploitation of print was Frans Coster. He cleverly utilised the press within the framework of his Marian confraternity, thereby reinforcing and widening its message.[37] Especially after 1585, when Antwerp became the focal point of Coster's activities, the Jesuit entrepreneur published his sermons in the vernacular and edited the texts according to the format of the commonplace book. His *Enchiridion* (1586/1591) was a portable manual dedicated to the fight against heretics in one's personal circle.[38] The *Seven meditatien* [*Seven meditations*] (1590) was conceived as an ode to the Virgin Mary but also discussed the merits of exile.[39]

In Douai, the printing house of Jean Bogard did much to shape public opinion along similar lines. His combined Leuven-Douai firm printed more than 500 titles between 1556 and 1616, many of which were dedicated to the Catholic cause.[40] Apart from Latin publications about Ignatius of Loyola and the Council of Trent, he offered portable booklets in French and Dutch. These included the official ban of outlawry imposed upon William of Orange (1580) and an account of the martyrdom of Orange's assassin Balthazar Gérard (1584). The *Institutio Necessaria* by Johannes Costerius was brought out by Bogard as well.[41] Arguably more important than these specific works is Vermaseren's observation that exile productions from Cologne and Douai feature common characteristics: they all showed strong traces of Jesuit rhetoric, and their arguments overlapped.[42] This confirms the impression that by 1580 Netherlandish expatriates in satellite towns were closely connected through correspondence and sodality networks. Under Jesuit inspiration this self-confident community was aiming to propagate a common Catholic agenda.

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[37] Von Mallinckrodt, 'Rechweite', 26.

[38] Discussed in Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 147–50; Marinus, 'Kampioenen', 34–5.

[39] Coster, *Seven meditatien*, 35–47. Other examples include his *Sermoonen*. See Porteman, 'Na 350 jaar'.

[40] Pettegree and Walsby, *Netherlandish Books*, vol. II, 1409–10. Duthilloeul lists more than 100 Douai titles by Bogard from 1573. Duthilloeul, *Bibliographie douaisienne*, 16–49, 457–8. See also Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 120–8.

[41] His Douai list in Duthilloeul, *Bibliographie douaisienne*, 16–49, 457–8. See also Andriessen, 'Een weinig bekend boekje', 66–9; Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen', 28–37.

[42] Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 49–50, 85–7, 285–94. Also Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 93–7, 239–44; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*.

### Internationalised print

It would be misleading to treat English and Netherlandish exile print culture as representing separate worlds. As Alexandra Walsham has already observed, the vibrant book culture of the English community abroad 'needs to be seen as one manifestation of a European-wide movement rivalling the brotherhood of Reformed churches scholars call "international Calvinism"'.[43] But research into the transnational dimension of the Catholic exile printing industry has been patchy. We know relatively little about its sources of financial support and any assessment is further complicated by the pervasiveness of anonymous authorship as well as forged places and dates of publication. English and Netherlandish exiles clearly collaborated with local printing firms in Douai, Antwerp and Leuven. It is notable that arguments developed by English authors regarding the respectability of exile were skilfully copied by their Netherlandish counterparts.[44] This also occurred the other way around. Lewis Evans, for example, found highly instructive the writings of Willem Lindanus, which inspired him to translate his treatise *The Betraying of the Beastlines of Heretykes*.[45] In 1581 Jean Bogard published a text by Englishman Richard Hall that addressed the troubles in the Netherlands.[46] Multiple translation projects of works by Nijmegen-born Jesuit Peter Canisius, his Italian colleague Robert Bellarmine and the Spanish Dominican Louis of Granada demonstrate how much English and Netherlandish exile interests overlapped and stood squarely within the ambit of international Tridentine piety.[47]

Apart from this devotional material, the presses in Paris, St Omer, Douai and Cologne delivered politicised tracts on topical issues. In the 1580s there was a boom in this internationally informed propaganda.[48] More specifically, the authors of these booklets drew creative connections among recent developments in France, the Low Countries and England. It did not take much for concerned Catholics to assume the existence of a secret Protestant alliance in northern Europe. Visits by the (Catholic) French duke of Anjou to England in 1579 and the rebel Netherlands in 1582 fuelled these suspicions. In some pamphlets the gloomy message

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[43] Walsham, 'Domme Preachers', 100.
[44] See Chapter 2. Compare assessments in Highley, *Catholics* and Vermaseren, *De katholieke*.
[45] Highley, *Catholics*, 37, 40, 74.
[46] Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 126–28; Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 94–5.
[47] Walsham, 'Domme Preachers', 96, 104; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 50–9. See also Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*, 86–109.
[48] A critical discussion of the term 'propaganda' in Bloemendal and Van Dixhoorn, 'Early Modern', 282–4; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*; De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, esp. ch. 6.

about a grand Protestant conspiracy was reinforced by millenarian narratives and the presentation of Philip II as messianic priest-king.[49] To avert a Protestant victory in France and the Netherlands and restore England to proper Catholic rule, the pamphleteers called for a Catholic league of princes. It is unclear if this supranational campaign was ever coordinated centrally, but exiles doubtless played a key role in its construction. Prominent émigrés, such as William Allen, Robert Persons, Cunerus Petri and Cornelis Loos, were among those who argued passionately for a pan-European 'holy crusade' in the early 1580s.[50] Paradoxically, Protestant authors contributed to the spread of this idea, too. While plans for a multilateral Catholic force were mostly wishful thinking, Protestant pamphleteers were keen to emphasise the very real risks of such a violent Catholic coalition.

Finally, the international character of exile activism was evident in the work of Richard Verstegan. Intelligencer, publicist and 'populariser of the Counter-Reformation', Verstegan travelled widely through France, Italy and the Low Countries.[51] In his newsletters and publications he was keen to forge a sense of international Catholic solidarity, urging readers that 'You who are a member with us of the same body of Christ and of the Church, may sympathise with us your afflicted brethren.'[52] It was typical that Verstegan's 1587 martyrology *Theatrum crudelitatum haereticorum nostri temporis* [*Theater of the Cruelties of the Heretics of Our Age*] integrated victims of Protestant aggression from England, France and the Low Countries as a matter of course.[53] His comprehensive book of martyrs was published in various translations and new editions in the following years.

It is more difficult to gauge the effectiveness of such printed material. We know that plans for a Catholic league against Elizabeth I in fact divided the English émigré community. What is more, much of the exiles' uncompromising vocabulary seems to have lacked persuasive power. Netherlandish émigré productions, for example, were mostly written in Latin and rarely supported by images or other visual effects. Scholars have remarked that Catholic polemicists also tended to campaign for rather

[49] Compare Bossy, *Giordano Bruno*, 3–5; Carroll, *Martyrs*, 242–55; Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*, 84–109; Parker, *The Grand Strategy*, 96–7; Parker, 'The Place', 167–214; Salmon, 'Catholic Resistance Theory', 221–3, 236–41; Wilkinson, *Mary Queen of Scots*, 72–8.

[50] Alford, *The Watchers*, 16, 72–89; Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 93–7, 239–43; Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*, 88–108; Highley, *Catholics*, 131–37; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 44–50; Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, 178–80.

[51] The quote 'popularizer of the Counter-Reformation' is taken from Arblaster, *Antwerp*, 265.

[52] Cited in Gibbon, *English Catholic Exiles*, 92.

[53] Verstegan, *Theatrum*; Burschel, *Sterben und Unsterblichkeit*, 246–9; Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 290. For Verstegan's life see Arblaster, *Antwerp*.

grotesque plans and that their caricatured narratives lacked sophistication and originality.[54] We may wonder, however, whether such characteristics really made for bad propaganda in the sixteenth century. Publishing in the *lingua franca* did not necessarily restrict the potential of print, nor was it a sign of old-fashioned, elitist attitudes. Especially in the 1580s, Latin facilitated the exiles' call for a pan-European Catholic movement. Recycling may also have been a deliberate strategy. It is true that the same arguments about the pollution of heresy, the diabolic nature of Reformed doctrines and the deceit of Protestant leaders were endlessly repeated; but a consistent employment of such stereotypes could be quite effective. After all, Catholic politicised print was mainly pitched at a 'home market'. It was intended not so much to persuade the core Protestant faithful or even religious moderates but to shape and harden the views of committed Catholics.[55] 'Othering' and demonising the enemy played a crucial role in the construction of Counter-Reformation identities.

There is no doubt that Catholic men and women could still attribute different meanings to publications pitched at them. Modern scholarship has warned against a single interpretation of sixteenth-century texts, emphasising instead a multiplicity of reading styles.[56] There is some circumstantial evidence that messages published in places such as Douai and Cologne resonated with readers. The exiled cleric Mathias Lambrecht recalled that his religious experience had deepened because he had 'been studying catechism during my time in Douai'.[57] The significant amount of devotional and polemical material produced in exile towns also points to the existence of a market for its militant agenda. A few surviving catalogues reveal how the works of Jesuit luminaries like Coster, Canisius and Persons penetrated the lives of refugees. Jacob Buyck, for instance, had based himself in 1578 in the provincial town of Emmerich, but he was still able to acquire the latest works by Willem Lindanus, Cunerus Petri, Thomas Stapleton, William Allen and Frans Coster.[58]

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[54] Highley, *Catholics*, 50–3; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 150; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*; Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, 27–9.

[55] Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 141–2; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 128–32.

[56] Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*; Grafton, *Commerce*; Visser, *Reading Augustine*, 95–113.

[57] Quoted in Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen', 10.

[58] UBA, Collectie Buyck, I D1, Index sive catalogus omnium librorum meorum et pretium eorumdem. See also Gnirrep, 'De bibliotheek'. Other examples in ARAB, Duitse staats-secretarie, 44, fo. 20, Albert of Austria to authorities in Münster, 16 March 1614 (about the sizeable library of the former bishop of Groningen); Coppens, *Reading in Exile*; Hogeman, 'Over de verbanning', 189–93.

Gislain Bulteel in Armentières was familiar with these innovative works too, and explained to his friend Petrus Simons that 'we used to relieve the tedium of our exile by reading good authors, or by reflecting and pondering a bit about them.'[59]

When assessing the impact of print on readers, it is important to consider that contemporaries used them in connection with other media. The versatile strategy of Frans Coster already showed how his publications complemented sermons and interacted with the activities of the sodality. Print and exile correspondence were likewise intertwined. Surviving letters of Stempelse and Lindanus regularly refer to the content of particular books. The printed martyrologies of Richard Verstegan and Pieter Opmeer were typically based on letters and eyewitness accounts that had circulated among exiles.[60] Hence the exiles' media world was more integrated and refined than can be revealed by the study of particular publications.

### Campaigning for the good cause

International Catholicism gained ground among the Netherlandish exiles as the Dutch revolt itself became internationalised. From the start, of course, the troubles in the Low Countries had been influenced by developments abroad.[61] The rise of (Reformed) Protestantism was intrinsically linked to refugee churches in England and the Holy Roman Empire. Disputes about monarchical authority in the Netherlands were part of larger discussions within the composite Habsburg empire. The military campaign in the Low Countries was coordinated from Madrid and conditioned by Philip II's priorities in the Mediterranean and elsewhere. His successive royal governors in Brussels – Alba, Requesens, Don Juan – were of Castilian or Catalonian descent.[62] Despite its popular name, the 'Spanish army' in the Dutch revolt in fact consisted of a variety of many nationalities. This was also true for the rebel forces, who received intermittent support from France. Yet Geoffrey Parker has argued that especially from 1580 the Dutch revolt came to be seen as part of an

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[59] Bakelants, *La vie*, 73.
[60] CBL, Cornelis Schultingius to Willem Lindanus, s.d. from Cologne; RAG, St Baafs, K 12542 (10184), Jacob Coemans Horstius, 23 May 1580 from Cologne; Brom and Hensen, *Romeinsche bronnen*, 348. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 287–97; Vermaseren, 'De bronnen', 93–108.
[61] See the classic study of Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* as well as Dunthorne, *Britain*; Pollmann, 'Internationalisering'.
[62] Don Juan was an illegitimate son of Charles V and Barbara Blomberg from Regensburg. He was taken away from his mother before the age of three and brought up in Spain. Bois, *Don Juan*, 33–42; Petrie, *Don John*, 19–31.

international struggle.[63] In 1581, Francis of Valois, duke of Anjou and heir to the French throne, accepted the invitation of the rebel States General to act as new sovereign. The following year he invaded the Netherlands with an army. After Anjou's premature leave and death in 1584, Queen Elizabeth I of England stepped in and sent troops to the Continent. These foreign interventions in support of the rebellion provided a fertile seedbed for calls for an international Catholic counteroffensive.

Individual exiles did their bit to advance this idea. Many had pondered solutions to the Dutch revolt from the start in their diaries, chronicles and letters. Exiles often felt that their lives in foreign safe havens had sharpened their perspective on the conflict. 'Now that I am in exile,' Peter Audomarus wrote in his account of the war, 'I understand the problems and causes of the troubles even better.'[64] Surviving records reveal that between 1572 and 1585 a series of White Papers was conceived within the refugee network. Addressed to authorities in Rome, Brussels and Madrid they offered blueprints for a Catholic recovery in the Netherlands and, eventually, the elimination of the Protestant threat in northern Europe as a whole.[65] Set up locally yet drawing inspiration from international sources, these successive proposals exemplify the changing world view of the exile community.

### Mobilisation through education

The Marian sodality of Cologne was a driving force behind many of these initiatives. In late 1573, a few years before its formal establishment, Jan Gerritsz Stempelse drafted a first memorandum that addressed the troubles in the Netherlands.[66] It was signed by a group of fellow Catholic refugees from Holland. Remarkably, the authors distanced themselves from the recent punitive campaign pursued by Alba's government. Instead, the refugees pleaded for education. In their eyes the turmoil in the Netherlands had essentially been the outcome of religious discord and ineffective clerical leadership. The solution to this was proper

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[63] Parker, *Spain and the Netherlands*, 65–81.
[64] Audomarus, *Declaratio cavssarvm*, preface.
[65] Some White Papers have been published. References to these and other plans in Theiner, *Annales ecclesiastici*, III, 474–5; Brom, 'Stukken', 415–9; Brom, 'Twee geschriften'; Brom, *Archivalia in Italië*, I-1, 270, 273, 463; II, 190–5, 220; III, 106, 267–70, 272–3; Brom and Hensen, *Romeinsche bronnen*, 229–33, 554–5; France, *Histoire*, III, 438–42. See also Possoz, *Jean Vendeville*, 66–72; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 18–24; Van der Essen, 'De raadsheer'; Van der Essen, 'La mission'.
[66] Parts of the following were published previously in Janssen, 'The Counter-Reformation of the Refugee'.

teaching, aimed at regaining the common faithful for the Church of Rome. Inspired by their positive experiences in Cologne, the Stempelse group proposed to establish Jesuit colleges in areas recently taken by rebel forces. The Society of Jesus could rejuvenate Catholic spirituality in towns that had been infected by heresy: for the same reason the exiles advised the establishment of a seminary for priests in nearby Utrecht. Such long-term investments in local Catholic infrastructure would do more good than would a military occupation, Stempelse and his co-authors argued.[67]

Such ideas did not come out of the blue. Alba's strategy to enforce obedience by punishment had received bad press in the Netherlands. By the early 1570s, numerous officials in the Habsburg administration advocated a pacification policy that focused on pardon and reconciliation.[68] The White Paper of the Cologne club differed from this moderate approach, however, in that it rejected concessions to Protestants and rebels. Instead, it propagated Tridentine education as a means to mobilise lay Catholics for the royalist cause. This strategy was clearly inspired by Jesuit recommendations. It is even possible that the rector of the Cologne college, Johannes Rethius, had suggested that Stempelse and his fellow exiles think in this direction. In any case it was Rethius who informed the Jesuit general in Rome, Everardus Mercurianus, of the proposal in February 1574. Meanwhile, the rector lobbied for the plan in the office of the papal nuncio in Cologne.[69]

The collective project from Cologne appeared to trigger some action. The nuncio responded enthusiastically and recommended the plans to the Roman Curia. Don Luis de Requesens, recently appointed governor in the Low Countries, referred to the issue in a letter addressed to Philip II in February 1574. On 4 December 1574 Pope Gregory XIII wrote to the archbishop of Utrecht and urged him to establish a seminary.[70] It proved difficult, however, to effectively coordinate the direction of reform from Rome and Cologne. As we have seen, plans that smacked of Trent's decrees had been unpopular among many senior clerics in the Netherlands, and the interference of the Jesuit order also caused suspicion. Above all, the ongoing war in Holland frustrated the founding of new seminaries and colleges. Still, the project points to the embryonic agency of the Stempelse group. Rather than leaving it to the authorities

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[67] Brom, 'Stukken', 415–19. Compare similar advices from Jean Vendeville in Soen, 'The Loyal Opposition', 46, 53–4.

[68] Janssens, *Brabant*, 404–12; Kamen, *The Duke of Alba*, 75–105; Soen, *Geen pardon*, esp. 243–55.

[69] ARSI, Germaniae, Epp., 135-I, Johannes Rethius to the General, 9 February and 4 March 1574 from Cologne. See also Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 19–22.

[70] Brom, 'Stukken', 421–2; *Correspondance de Philippe II*, III, 20–2; Rogier, *Geschiedenis*, I, 211.

at home to deal with the troubles, the Cologne exiles were eager to claim a role for themselves. Their alternative programme highlighted, for the first time, the crucial contribution of the laity in regaining the contested Netherlands for Catholicism.

### Towards a new order

The growing influx of refugees in Cologne after 1577 and the subsequent expansion of the Marian confraternity gave a new impetus to the exile agenda. One of its most prominent members, the expelled bishop Willem Lindanus, composed a fresh White Paper in early 1578. It resonated with some of Stempelse's ideas, but offered a more comprehensive master plan.[71] Initially addressed to the king's governor Don Juan, the proposal attributed a key role to the exiles. In Lindanus' view the troubles in the Low Countries had principally been caused by unreliable town magistrates. He characterised the urban elite as 'feeble', 'money-grubbing' men with 'lukewarm religious interests', who had 'neglected their responsibilities in government'.[72] As we have seen, these were exactly the kind of stereotypes that Frans Coster liked to exploit. In the eyes of Lindanus, a radical purge of urban office-holders was crucial for the restoration of Habsburg authority and the institution of a Catholic monopoly in the Netherlands. More specifically, he proposed that political replacements could best be recruited among those 'respectable men, of confirmed faith and proven moral quality and experience, who, for the sake of God and their Catholic king, have left all they had, and are currently living in exile.'[73] Lindanus thus advised that the exiles of Cologne and elsewhere be used as the pioneering forces of a new Catholic political order. He even called for the establishment of a 'council' of prominent refugees, who could advise the government about policy and future appointments. Such a gesture would also be proper recompense for the 'great poverty' that the exiles – including Lindanus himself – had been enduring for years.[74]

As for the broader objectives of this plan, Lindanus argued in his White Paper that a restoration of Habsburg authority was intrinsically linked to a

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[71] Published in Brom, 'Twee geschriften', 277–300. See an assessment in Spiertz, 'Wilhemus Lindanus', 192–213.

[72] See Van Beuningen, *Wilhelmus Lindanus*, 189–90. This analysis resonated with an advice of Lindanus from ten years earlier. Also compare similar remarks made by Laurentius Mets bishop of 's-Hertogenbosch in: *Correspondance de Philippe II*, IV, 739–94.

[73] Brom, 'Twee geschriften', 284. This policy had been tested by the bishop himself. From 1572, Lindanus had consciously appointed exiles from Holland to ecclesiastical positions in his diocese. Van Beuningen, *Wilhelmus Lindanus*, 285–87.

[74] Van Beuningen, *Wilhelmus Lindanus*, 17.

renewal of Catholic spirituality. New magistrates with exile credentials should therefore also swear an oath of loyalty to the Council of Trent. In this way loyalty to the Church of Rome would become inseparable from allegiance to the king of Spain and his government.[75] In addition, future priests should be tested on their ability to fight heresy. Lindanus also added some more predictable guidelines for Tridentine reform, such as the implementation of stricter rules for regular priests and the establishment of seminaries.[76]

The new master plan appeared at a critical moment. We have already seen how in the years between the Pacification of Ghent (1576) and the Cologne peace negotiations (1579) both parties in the Dutch revolt hardened their positions.[77] A growing number of Catholics who had initially supported the rebellion became uncomfortable with a movement that had incited Calvinist radicalism, particularly in Flemish and Brabantine towns. In the context of this growing Catholic anxiety, the programme of Lindanus offered some clear, radical alternatives. His blueprint immediately found a receptive ear in the person of Don Juan, who was frustrated about his own dealings with the moderate Catholic centre. He forwarded the plans to Madrid in spring 1578, while Lindanus himself sent copies to the Roman Curia. In November 1578 Lindanus travelled to Rome, undoubtedly to elaborate on his ideas. He was received warmly by Pope Gregory XIII and subsequently went to Madrid, apparently at the request of the Pope.[78]

Although it is difficult to establish how much influence Lindanus really possessed in Spanish court circles, it is notable that his proposals arrived at the time when both the Roman Curia and Philip II shifted their policies. Pope Gregory XIII, who not long before had favoured a peace agreement with the rebels, sent out new instructions to the Netherlandish bishops in June 1578 – a few weeks after the White Paper reached Rome. The papal guidelines echoed elements of Lindanus' uncompromising plan. The Pope announced that from now on it was strictly forbidden for Catholics to serve the rebel government. More specifically, clerics were warned not to attend any meetings of the States General.[79] As a result,

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[75] This reasoning was also characteristic of Jesuit discourses. Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 33–4, 40–1, 51–3.

[76] Brom, 'Twee geschriften', 285–90.

[77] See Chapter 2. Assessments of this gradual polarisation are offered in Janssens, *Brabant*; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*; Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*.

[78] In Spain Lindanus presented another memorandum of which the content is unknown. Van Durme, *Les archives générales*, IV, 169; Brom and Hensen, *Romeinsche bronnen*, 260–2; Spiertz, 'Wilhelmus Lindanus', 210.

[79] Published in Brom, 'Stukken', 429–39.

Catholic moderates found themselves in a difficult position. Over the course of 1579 the majority of bishops and clerics in the Low Countries saw no alternative to reconciliation with the Habsburg government. In so doing, they marked a division between two opposing parties in the conflict that was increasingly perceived in confessional terms.[80]

In Madrid, Lindanus' visit coincided with a new spirit of optimism at the royal court. The financial fiascos of the mid 1570s behind him, Philip II saw his income from the Americas increase significantly from 1577. Moreover, temporary peace agreements with the Ottomans in the Mediterranean allowed the king to redirect his funds. In 1580–81, Philip successfully claimed the Portuguese throne. Several scholars, notably John H. Elliott and Geoffrey Parker, have demonstrated how these events enabled Philip to launch audacious new campaigns against the rebel Netherlands and Protestant England.[81] In the context of Lindanus' proposal, it is notable that in 1580 the king announced the establishment of two seminaries for priests – an express wish of the exiles. Chronicler Pieter Bor even claimed that the plan had been implemented 'by the pressure of Wilhelmus Lindanus … while he was in Spain'.[82] In any case, the king appointed Johannes Strijen, expelled bishop of Middelburg and a member of Cologne's Marian sodality, to be the head of the new seminary in Leuven. For the foundation in Douai, Philip chose Willem Estius, member of a family of exiled magistrates from Gorinchem.[83] These nominations were only the beginning of the Habsburg exile appointment scheme. As will be shown in Chapter 6, Lindanus' suggestion to grant émigrés leading positions in retaken towns in the Netherlands was followed up with great care during the ensuing *reconquista* of Alexander Farnese.

The endorsement of at least part of Lindanus' paper prompts questions about its wider background. It was not unusual for citizens and lobby groups in early modern society to submit petitions to their governments. Such 'bottom-up' initiatives often provided the basis for new laws and regulations.[84] The exiles thus drew on established practices. It could be argued that the war even increased their potential agency. The heavy disruptions caused by the Dutch revolt – political, religious and social – enabled authorities on both sides to initiate reform from scratch. It is interesting that Lindanus' suggestion of appointing exiles in recaptured

[80] Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd*, 79–88 ; Spiertz, 'Wilhelmus Lindanus', 199–210; Janssens, *Brabant*; Valvekens, *De Zuid-Nederlandsche*, 103–9, 198–201.

[81] Parker, *Army of Flanders*, 200–5; Parker, *The Grand Strategy*, 145, 164–70; Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 263–70.

[82] Bor, *Oorsprongk*, II, 215.      [83] HAK, Jesuiten, A52, fo. 62; Bor, *Oorsprongk*, II, 215.

[84] Vermeesch, 'Professional Lobbying', 95–100.

areas mirrored the strategy followed by the rebels since 1572. Numerous returning evangelical refugees had been granted seats in rebel town councils, Orange's administration as well as in the Reformed church. Contemporaries were well aware of the influence of the Calvinist exiles in the improvised political and religious order of the rebel state. Lindanus in fact adopted the tested policies of his enemies, whose authority he contested at the same time.

The manifesto of 1578 also fits with a more recent trend among exiled Catholics. It resembled, for example, plans being developed by William Allen in anticipation of a military invasion of England. Allen had drafted a first advisory memorandum in Rome in 1576. This White Paper shows some striking parallels with Lindanus' programme conceived two years later. Allen similarly proposed 'to call upon and enrol as many from among the English Catholic laity who now live outside England' and to send exiled priests from the Continent 'to prepare' the Catholic resurgence. The pioneering exile forces would later be remunerated 'from the possessions . . . of heretics and rebels in England, Scotland and Ireland.'[85] In the following years Allen, as well as Robert Persons and exiles associated with the duke of Guise, would elaborate on these plans, which eventually intermingled with the Armada project of 1588. Historians have often dismissed the English invasion schemes as being rather grotesque and unrealistic. At best, they confirm the impression that the radical wing of the English exile community had lost touch with the times.[86] Yet the contrasting example of the Netherlands, where similar White Papers were eventually tested, shows what preparations in exile could potentially achieve. Considering these plots and schemes together also acknowledges the transnational context in which they were conceived.

### Crusade

A final memorandum by Stempelse brings out this increasingly international thinking particularly well. The stirring member of the Marian sodality sent his White Paper to the papal nuncio Bonomi in June 1583.[87] His advice clearly differed from what had been offered in previous proposals. Whereas in 1573–74 the Stempelse group had highlighted the

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[85] Renold, *Letters*, 289–90. I am grateful to Eamon Duffy for pointing me to this source.
[86] Alford, *The Watchers*; Carroll, *Martyrs*, 242–55; Holmes, *Resistance*, 129–46; Walsham, 'Translating Trent', 288–91; Questier, 'Elizabeth and the Catholics', 69–84.
[87] Only a summary has survived in Theiner, *Annales ecclesiastici*, III, 474–75. See also Brom, *Archivalia in Italië*, I-1, 463; Droog, 'De oprichting', esp. 109–12.

'Netherlandishness' of the troubles, the master plan of ten years later presented the Dutch revolt as part of a larger struggle against heresy, disorder and tyranny in Europe. In short, it advocated a comprehensive military approach. In Stempelse's words, Catholic Europe needed a collective 'holy war' (*sacrum bellum*) waged by princes. Although the author did little to elaborate on this rather far-reaching proposal, his ideas were evidently shaped by the flow of recent publications about a Catholic crusade. Stempelse may have been particularly influenced by the work of his fellow townsman from Gouda, Cornelis Loos, who had called for a holy war in his bellicose *De tumultuosa belgarum rebellion sedanda*.[88] For polemicists like Loos the crusade model was a fitting rhetorical concept, even if it lacked much practical substance. It helped to frame the different Protestant regimes in England, Scotland, the Low Countries and France as a common 'enemy within', thereby moulding the notion of a contrasting Counter-Reformation international.[89]

Crusading had of course traditionally been used as a legitimising ideology for wars against Muslim powers. During the religious troubles in France in the 1560s, several Catholic confraternities had adopted crusade terminology for the first time while waging their violent campaigns against Protestants in their midst.[90] From 1572, Pope Gregory XIII was willing to offer official papal blessing to such initiatives, thus broadening the crusade concept. In January 1578, Gregory published a bull supporting Don Juan's troops, which included phrases that had previously been used in papal declarations glorifying Christians who went to war against Muslim forces.[91] Anti-Islam narratives were thus reformulated to suit the new Protestant threat. The link between these two common Catholic enemies was especially meaningful since Don Juan had defeated the Ottoman fleet at Lepanto in 1571. He could now continue his self-styled Catholic crusade in the Netherlands and during a possible invasion of Protestant England. On the battlefield of Gembloux on 31 January 1578, some of Don Juan's soldiers wore on their shirts the embroidered slogan 'In this sign I conquered the Turcs, in this sign I will conquer the heretics.'[92] Despite this promising start, Don Juan's northern holy war ended

[88] Loos, *De tumultuosa belgarum rebellion sedanda*. Discussed in Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 47–49. Compare Bireley, 'Jesuiten', 87–100.
[89] Compare Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 50; Alford, *The Watchers*, 16, 72–89; Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand*, 93–7, 239–43; Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*, 88–108; Highley, *Catholics*, 131–7; Holmes, *Resistance*, 143–6; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 44–50; Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, 178–80.
[90] O'Banion, 'Only the King Can Do It', 553–8; Harding, 'The Mobilization', 91.
[91] According to Bor, *Oorsprongk*, I, 935.
[92] 'In hoc signo vici Turcos, in hoc vincam haereticos.' Bois, *Don Juan*, 347.

abruptly with his death later that year.[93] This failure did not deter Gregory XIII from using his pontifical prerogatives again. In May 1580 he gave the Irish resistance against Elizabeth I the official status of 'crusade'.[94] Two years later the duke of Guise contemplated a new plot against England, intended to dethrone Elizabeth in favour of his relative, the imprisoned Mary Stuart. Guise asked the Pope to declare his campaign a crusade, too.[95] Throughout the 1580s, crusading remained a popular Counter-Reformation concept, for example during the ill-fated Armada enterprise of 1588.[96] Although the Catholic crusade plan of Stempelse and the Netherlandish exiles never materialised, its frequent appearance in their writings is significant. After all, it contrasted sharply with their more moderate proposals of 1573–74, in which the Stempelse group had argued that the arrival of Jesuits would do more good than troops would. This shifting agenda exemplifies the gradual radicalisation of the Cologne refugees and the adoption of a transnational Catholic vocabulary.

### Fighting, fundraising and murder

For all their creativity, the successive exile White Papers of the 1570s and 1580s offered rather abstract policy proposals. Some refugees preferred to undertake concrete action. Clearly, these more straightforward projects also aimed to engineer the exiles' return home.[97] First, émigrés were frequently involved with military insurgencies. By writing letters and mobilising support in their former home communities, émigré magistrates sought to regain their towns for the king – and for themselves.[98] Others put their lives at risk in combat. When rebel ships captured the royal fleet at the Zuiderzee in 1573, the list of imprisoned officers revealed that most of these 'Spanish soldiers' were in fact local exiled elites and other Dutchmen.[99] Indeed, the so-called 'Spanish army' in the

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[93] Kamen, *Philip of Spain*, 160–2; Parker, *The Grand Strategy*, 165–9; Petrie, *Don John*, 227–59, 280–95. Crusading had also played a significant role in earlier, Burgundian ideology.

[94] García Hernán, *Ireland and Spain*, 291. See also Highley, *Catholics*, 131–7.

[95] Rodríguez-Salgado, 'The Anglo-Spanish War', 5; Carroll, *Martyrs*, 242–55.

[96] Gómez-Centurión Jiménez, 'The New Crusade', 264–90. It also remained alive after 1588, see Holmes, *Resistance*, 143–6; Walsham, 'Translating Trent', 288–90; Tyerman, 'Holy War', 293–307; Tyerman, *The Debate*, 37–66.

[97] ARAB, Audiëntie, 589; 1787/1; 1831/1. Bor, *Oorsprongk*, II, 203–4. Also see Marnef, 'Een Gentse proost'; Dudok van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse burgers*, I, 87–91.

[98] See examples in Bor, *Oorsprongk*, I, 410; Velius, *Kroniek*, II, 534; Boeree, 'Het verraad'; Van Nierop, *Treason*, 93–121; Sicking, *Geuzen en glippers*, 11–12. Letterwriting was a strategy the rebels also used. Deen, 'Handwritten Propaganda', 207–26.

[99] *Correspondentie Willem van Oranje*, 9274, Nicolaes Ruychaver to William of Orange, 13 October 1573, including a list of imprisoned officers; Velius, *Kroniek*, II, 526–30.

Netherlands owed some of its audacious expeditions to the commitment of enlisted refugees. The Bontenos family from Amsterdam, for one, fled their home after the Protestant takeover in 1578 and reportedly lost many of their possessions. Three sons of Jacob Jacobsz Bontenos decided to take up arms to avenge this injustice. One of them died on the battle-field near Roermond in 1582.[100] No less than 350 exiles from Friesland, Groningen and Overijssel formed a separate unit in the royal army of the count of Rennenberg. According to local chronicler Zeger ter Stege, almost all of them perished during the dramatic siege of Steenwijk in 1580–81.[101]

Second, exiles could do their bit by providing intelligence, logistical support and funding for royal troops. Cologne was an obvious base for the coordination of such aid. The Rhine city had long been a meeting place for military contractors, arms suppliers and financial brokers.[102] Gerard Westendorp and Herman van Moeyssenbrouck, both expelled members of the Court of Friesland, continued to service the Habsburg administration by setting up an intelligence service for Farnese.[103] They liaised with the Habsburg bureaucrat Bucho Aytta, also based in Cologne, who sought to persuade local Cologne merchants to deliver financial services to the Habsburg crown and facilitated the transport of grain to the royal army.[104] The latter was also supplied by Jacob Ficq, former grain merchant from Amsterdam with Hanseatic contacts.[105] Ficq's resentment about his exile fed an energetic, combative temperament. Among other things, he used his connections in the Baltic states to arrange shipments of corn for Habsburg troops and tried to interest Duke Adolf of Holstein-Gottorp to sabotage Amsterdam's trade in the area. Ficq proposed to use harbours in the duke's territories as bases for a Habsburg-sponsored fleet. This

[100] Dudok van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse burgers*, I, 102–3. Other examples in Wagenaar, *Amsterdam*, IV, 9–12.

[101] Hogeman, 'Over de verbanning', 190–1; Hoogland, 'De Friesche vlugtelingen'; Van Nimwegen and Sicking, 'De Opstand', 93–4.

[102] Edelmayer, *Söldner*, 251–64; Parrott, *The Business of War*, 89–93, 210–17.

[103] Many of their letters in ARAB, Audiëntie, 589, 1449/3, 1787/1, 1793/3, 1831/1. See also Bor, *Oorsprongk*, II, 203. Interesting related material in *Afgheworpene brieven*; Feith, *Register*, III, 54; Hammonius, *Aantekeningen*; UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 664, fo. 204; Tresoar, Eysinga, 2958.

[104] ARAB, Audiëntie, 589, fo. 198, George Westendorp and Bucho Aytta to Alexander Farnese, 29 July 1581 from Cologne; fo. 261, Bucho Aytta to Alexander Farnese, 8 January 1582 from Namur; 1787/1, Bucho Aytta to Alexander Farnese, 27 February 1581 from Cologne. An admirable assessment is offered in Marnef, 'Een Gentse proost', 75–86.

[105] Ficq was related to the powerful Buyck dynasty. De Bont, *Genealogische*, 45–7. It is unclear if Ficq (or Fick) was related to the 17th century Amsterdam family De Vicq. *DWJ*, I, 483; Dudok van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse burgers*, II, 670–81.

would cause significant damage to Holland's vital commercial link with ports on the Baltic Sea.[106]

A third area of potential exile activity concerned assassination schemes. During the revolt a number of attacks were plotted against William of Orange, his envoy Marnix of St Aldegonde and the duke of Anjou.[107] Orange had been sentenced *in absentia* by the Council of Troubles in 1568, which provided some semi-legal grounds for this type of action. Philip II formally sanctioned attempts to kill the rebel leader in 1580, when he outlawed the prince of Orange and promised a generous remuneration to his assassin. In July 1584 Balthazar Gérard from the Franche-Comté struck the mortal blow by shooting Orange with a pistol. There is no surviving evidence that Catholic exiles were directly involved in these assassination attempts. Spanish reports mention that a Flemish priest in Cologne explored the possibility of murdering Orange in 1579. The Jesuits also seem to have shown an interest. Prior to his trip to Holland, Gérard was reportedly in touch with a member of the order in Trier. It is illustrative of the exile mindset, however, that Gérard's deed was widely publicised and celebrated. Gislain Bulteel composed a series of resentful epitaphs after the death of the rebel leader:

> Here lies deceit and trickery, plague and tyrant,
> Treachery and crime, ruin of the fatherland,
> Incest and adultery, perjury, misdeed,
> Flood of vice, ugly greed:
> Here lies Autolycus, Verres, Catiline, Cethegus,
> And Nero. In short: here lies Orange.[108]

Balthazar Gérard, who was gruesomely executed after the assassination at Delft, was singled out for praise by Bulteel:

> Here lies Gérard, who with his invincible mind pierced the
>     Tyrant
> with a threefold bullet and killed him.
> And by that single blow he paved a way to the stars for the
>     Belgians,
> for the fatherland of safety and for his own soul.[109]

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[106] ARAB, Audiëntie, 1830/4, Several undated letters [*c*.1581–88] by Jacob Ficq to Alexander Farnese. Ficq also wrote a White Paper in exile in Tournai in 1582. France, *Troubles*, III, 438–42.

[107] Bor, *Oorsprongk*, II, 331; Kamen, *Philip of Spain*, 255; Swart, *Willem van Oranje*, 227–8, 251–3.

[108] Bakelants, *La vie*, 474. Autolycus was a son of Hermes and a master of thievery. Verres was a corrupt Roman magistrate (*c*.120 BC–43 BC). Catiline [Catalina] (108 BC–62 BC) and Gaius Cornelius Cethegus were notorious Roman conspirators.

[109] Bakelants, *La vie*, 474.

Bulteel's writings are just one example of what must have been a popular exile genre.[110] In Cologne, several refugees campaigned for the beatification of Gérard. In anticipation of such an effort, Sasbout Vosmeer had Gérard's skull smuggled to Cologne. In the exile's bastion, it was displayed as a relic.[111] Admiration for Balthazar Gérard as a martyr was shared by many English Catholic exiles. Indeed, the death of William of Orange provided fresh inspiration for attempts to assassinate 'that other heretical tyrant', Queen Elizabeth. An exiled English priest in Dunkirk, who contemplated such a plan, kept an engraving depicting Orange's murder in his room.[112] In their hatred of Protestant leaders, Catholic exiles of different nationalities made common cause with each other.

[110] Other examples in: UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 664, fo. 36–40, 90, 152; Bakelants, *La vie*, 473–5; Duthilloeul, *Bibliographie douaisienne*, 28–30; Dusseldorpius, *Uittreksel*, 198–202; Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 36; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 172; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 129, 140, 158; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, xliv, 49–50, 135–6.

[111] Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 33; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 49–50. About Gérard's afterlife see Bosma, *Balthazar Gerards*, esp. 94–101; De Baar, Kloek and Van der Meer, *Balthasar G.*, 64–82.

[112] Alford, *The Watchers*, 134–5. Compare Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles*, 97; Jardine, *The Awful End*, 50–76, 99–115; Walsham, 'Domme Preachers', 114. Frans Hogenberg's engravings of the assassination and of a previous attempt by Jean Jauregui were also collected by Hermann Weinsberg in Cologne. *Weinsberg*, 9 March and 18 March 1582, 10 July 1584.

*Part 3*

# Return

# 6     A new order: the Southern Netherlands

**Cologne in Antwerp**

In 1593 a brand-new triptych entered the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp. It showed the crucifixion of Christ and featured a dramatic cityscape of Jerusalem in the background [Fig. 7].

The left panel depicted the figure of the recently deceased Caspar van der Cruyce, kneeling in prayer. His mother, Josine de Meyere, reportedly commissioned the triptych after his untimely death on 20 February 1593. It has remained in the Cathedral's collection ever since. Although the Van der Cruyce triptych has not received much scrutiny from scholars, it is generally regarded as a typical example of early Counter-Reformation art in Antwerp.[1] Seven and a half years before Caspar van der Cruyce's death, in August 1585, the largest city of the Low Countries had surrendered to the armies of Alexander Farnese. Following the Habsburg takeover, Protestant Antwerp was re-catholicised and its churches refurbished according to the latest Tridentine fashions.[2] The Van der Cruyce artwork fit within this Counter-Reformation cleansing campaign, which sought to wipe out the memory of rebellion and dissent, and to express the ideals of a reinvented Catholic city.

In visualising the religious transformation of Antwerp, the Van der Cruyce triptych confronts the viewer with a problem that has long puzzled historians. The resurgence of Catholicism in the Southern Netherlands in the later sixteenth century is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable achievements of the Tridentine project in Europe. Places such as Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent had once been hotbeds of Protestantism and anti-Habsburg opposition. Yet after 1585, these heartlands of the revolt were quickly transformed into bastions of Counter-Reformation zeal. Their shifting religious allegiances would have lasting consequences

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[1] Goetschalckx, *Geschiedenis*, 100–7; Van de Velde, 'The Sixteenth Century', 201; Timmermans, *Patronen*, 107, 202–6.
[2] Freedberg, 'The Representation', 128–38; Thijs, *Van geuzenstad*, 111–26.

Figure 7 Triptych with Christ at the cross, *c*.1593. O.L.V. Kathedraal Antwerpen/Lukas-Art in Flanders.

for the region. First, they cemented the split of the Low Countries into two contrasting states: a predominantly Protestant Dutch Republic in the north and a restored Catholic Habsburg monarchy in the south. Second, they affected the balance of power for the whole of northern Europe. Turned into a Counter-Reformation stronghold, the Southern Netherlands became the primary hub for English exiles and Catholic radicals from France, was home to a powerful Tridentine publishing network and provided a vital base for Habsburg power in the North Sea area for another two centuries.[3]

There is little doubt about the significance of Catholic recovery in this corner of Europe, but historians have struggled to explain its underlying causes. In line with tendencies in international scholarship, scholars in the past generally assumed that Catholic revival had been imposed from above. Rigorous Tridentine reforms by the triumphant Habsburg state were believed to have been the driving forces behind the Netherlandish Counter-Reformation.[4] More recently, arguments in favour of a 'bottom-up' explanation have been brought forward. The unexpected rejuvenation of Catholic religiosity after Alexander Farnese's *reconquista* may have had

[3] Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety*, 41–56; Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 208–24; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 125–91; Soen, *Vredehandel*, 131–46.
[4] Cloet, 'De gevolgen', 53–78; Thijs, *Van geuzenstad*, 33–60; Tracy, 'With and without', 548. See also Marinus, *De contrareformatie*, esp. 39; Put and Harline, *A Bishop's Tale*; Verleysen, 'Ambachten', ch. 3.

something to do with the traumatic experience of Protestant radicalism in previous years. The Calvinist governance of Flemish and Brabantine towns had already bred an embryonic Counter-Reformation movement among their discontented citizens.[5] Thus, while historians agree that after 1585 Catholics in the recaptured Habsburg Netherlands started to organise themselves and develop a confessional identity, they are divided about the forces that set in motion this shift in mentality.

The Van der Cruyce triptych offers some fresh perspectives on this debate. Close inspection reveals that the painting of 1593 contains a number of intriguing clues to the origins of Catholic revival. Caspar van der Cruyce and Josine de Meyere belonged to one of Antwerp's most distinguished mercantile dynasties. Zealously committed to Catholicism, the family had escaped the city during the Calvinist regime of 1579–85. In exile in Cologne, Caspar found spiritual consolation and confessional renewal in the Jesuit-led Marian confraternity.[6] Like most Catholic refugees, Caspar and his relatives returned to their native city after the Habsburg victory of August 1585. When the exiles retook their former positions, they were keen to promulgate their radicalised agenda and cultivate a public aura that celebrated their exile past as heroic. It is telling that on the triptych, St Ursula featured prominently on the right panel. This legendary patron saint of Cologne had protected Caspar and his fellow Antwerpers during the dark days in exile. The chapel for which the painting was made had recently been renamed in her honour and housed some of St Ursula's relics, which Caspar himself had brought from Cologne. To emphasise the family's link with their former place of asylum, the triptych's wings also included a representation of the three biblical kings. When the side panels were closed, visitors were confronted with a reference to Cologne's foremost relic: the Shrine of the Three Magi.[7]

The Van der Cruyce panel in Antwerp's cathedral thus served to remove the memory of Calvinism but it also created a new memorial in its place. It paid tribute to the history of flight of numerous Catholic Antwerpers and highlighted the formative role that returning refugees had played in the religious conversion of the city after 1585. Replete with references to Cologne, a breeding ground for a new Catholicism, the triptych celebrated the brave exile experience with which many

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[5] Arblaster, 'The Southern Netherlands', 125–7; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 125–58; Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 146–67.

[6] HAK, Jesuiten, A52, A52a, Lists of membership.

[7] This was particularly meaningful because Caspar was named after one of the three Magi (Caspar, Balthazar and Melchior).

citizens could identify. Recent scholarship provides further evidence for this reading of the Van der Cruyce memorial. In their work on Counter-Reformation Antwerp, M. J. Marinus and Bert Timmermans have observed the prominence of a 'Cologne clan' among the city's post-1585 elite. Contemporary sources confirm that former exiles gained leading positions in the rejuvenated Catholic Church of the Southern Netherlands.[8] All this alerts us to the effect of returning exiles in the re-catholicised Low Countries. What, then, was the long-term impact of exile on Catholic culture in the Southern Netherlands?

### The return of the refugees

The Habsburg *reconquista* of the 1580s was the outcome of military strategy, internal divisions among the rebels and, above all, financial windfalls. Following the annexation of Portugal and the diminishing threat of the Ottomans in the Mediterranean, Philip II was able to prioritise the Dutch revolt after 1581. An unexpected increase in revenues from the Americas simultaneously allowed the king to allocate large sums to the Netherlands. Peruvian silver became the financial backbone of the revived northern war.[9] Philip's cousin and royal governor, Alexander Farnese, was put in command of a rapidly expanding 'Army of Flanders'. A shrewd general and an efficient manager, Farnese proved very fit for the job: he skilfully combined military pressure with conciliatory diplomacy – an adept use of bribery also helped. Backed by royal trust and financial resources, the general-diplomat transformed the war in the Low Countries.[10] In 1580 Farnese took the towns of Breda and Kortrijk, followed by Tournai the next year. This marked the beginning of a spectacular campaign in which almost the entire south and east of the Low Countries was conquered over the course of just three years [Map 2]. As a result, all the major towns of Flanders (Ypres, Bruges, Ghent), Brabant (Brussels, Antwerp) and Gelderland (Zutphen, Nijmegen) returned to Habsburg control. By 1585, the rebel territory was mostly confined to Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht and Friesland.

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[8] Marinus, *De contrareformatie*, esp. 52, 158–9, 255; Timmermans, *Patronen*, esp. 50–9, 106–10, 140–6, 188–206; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, esp. 138–42.

[9] Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 268–77; Parker, *The Army of Flanders*, 204–7; Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 208–15.

[10] The classic work on Farnese is Van der Essen, *Alexandre Farnèse*. See also Parker, *The Grand Strategy*; Parrott, *The Business of War*, 15, 89–93; Soen, 'Reconquista'; Tracy, *The Founding*, 215–24.

These victories boosted Catholic morale. For the exile community in particular, Farnese's progress was the answer to their prolonged prayers. Gislain Bulteel enthusiastically remembered the fall of Ypres in April 1584: 'It was truly a golden day that rescued us from exile and put us back in our old home. Ah, day that I love more than that of my birth! Ah, day that will always be a holiday [i.e. feast] for me!'[11] On 1 September 1585 Hermann Weinsberg remarked in his diary that festivities had been organised in Cologne to mark the surrender of Antwerp. Mass was celebrated in one of the city's foremost churches, the St Maria im Kapitol: 'They furnished the entire church, from top to bottom, with costly tapestries and decorated it with rare ornaments, flowers and coronets.' During the service the priest duly thanked the government of Cologne for its hospitality and protection during the challenging years of exile. A grand procession followed, in which Netherlandish Catholics solemnly paraded, 'each with a flaming torch in their hand, adorned with flowers.' For the last time, the exiles showed themselves publicly in their asylum. According to Weinsberg most of them left the city in the following weeks.[12]

The Habsburg government was keen to encourage a speedy remigration of the émigrés scattered across northern Europe. Clergy in particular were urgently needed to support the re-establishment of Catholicism in recaptured territory. At the request of Philip II, the Pope published a bull in 1584 that ordered exiled religious to return to the areas recovered from the rebels. Farnese gave similar instructions to displaced loyalist officeholders.[13] Reports from Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp and Brussels confirm the arrival of hundreds of exiled priests, nuns, magistrates and other laymen and women in the course of 1584–85.[14] This massive remigration was welcomed by at least some citizens in the Southern Netherlands. After the siege of Tournai in 1581, Philippe Warny claimed that 'the poor Catholics' in town were 'delighted and pleased' to see 'those who had been banished'.[15] In Ghent, Philip van Campene recorded how in March 1585 the Council of Flanders, accompanied by a train of solicitors, attorneys and their families, returned from exile in Douai. The group was greeted outside the city gates by 'several honourable men and citizens'.[16] Antwerp witnessed a particularly large influx of returning male and female religious in the months after its capture. On their way

[11] Bakelants, *La vie*, 76.    [12] *Weinsberg*, 17 August 1585.
[13] Brom and Hensen, *Romeinsche bronnen*, 289; Hendrickx, 'De reconciliatie', 78–79; Aerts, 'Spanje', 22.
[14] Foppens, *Histoire*, 70–1; Marinus, *De contrareformatie*, 155–6; Prims, *Geschiedenis*, VIII-3, 217, 226, 252–3; Weydts, *Chronique*, 144–5.
[15] Warny, *Mémoires*, 32.    [16] Van Campene, *Vlaemsche kronijk*, 352, 344.

home, the Poor Clares optimistically purchased a few new relics in Trier to furnish the convent that would be restored to them.[17]

Yet homecoming was a confusing experience. Most of the property of Catholic fugitives had been confiscated during their absence. Houses had been rented out to strangers, furniture sold at public auctions and religious convents converted into schools and hospitals. Some ecclesiastical buildings had been broken down altogether. The physical traces of the exiles' existence had been erased. Stigmatised as traitors by the rebel regime, the Catholic refugees held an ambiguous status at best. Farnese's reconciliation agreements sought to solve the problems that these measures had caused by explicitly revoking all banishments and forfeitures. Churches would receive their property back and citizens were compelled to return commodities that they had purchased from disputed confiscation sales. But this retroactive decision spawned tensions on the ground. Philip van Campene noted how priests, nuns and beguines in Ghent found their convents and homes occupied and simply 'removed the worldly people, who lived there'.[18] The forced restitution of 'paintings, clothes, books and furniture' met with resistance in Antwerp and triggered court cases in the following years.[19]

In any event, some of Farnese's measures intended to reimburse exiles proved difficult to implement. The years of Calvinism in Flanders and Brabant had changed the social and physical landscape of towns. By abolishing Catholic worship and removing Habsburg loyalists from their midst, the rebel regime had effectively redefined the urban communities under its governance. In their attempt to forge a new corporate identity, Reformed authorities had altered the urban environment to express the new values of the Calvinist republics. Thus, monuments, fortifications and public buildings had been erected, often located at highly symbolic, formerly 'Catholic' spaces. In Antwerp a new street was paved so as to conveniently connect the stock exchange to the milk market. Its course ran right through an area previously occupied by a Catholic convent. Something similar happened in Ghent, where all but the bell tower of the church of St Pharaildis had been demolished. On its grounds was built a group of fashionable townhouses.[20]

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[17] Schoutens, *Geschiedenis*, 107–8, 111–13; Prims, *Geschiedenis*, VIII-3, 217, 226, 252–3.
[18] Van Campene, *Vlaemsche kronijk*, 344. Also Weydts, *Chronique*, 145.
[19] Hendrickx, 'De reconciliatie', 83–6; Put, 'Een rompraad', 146; Verheyden, 'Het herstel', esp. 102–113.
[20] Van Campene, *Vlaemsche kronijk*, 347–48. Hendrickx, 'De reconciliatie', 85. Other examples in Prims, *Geschiedenis*, VIII-3, 247; Prims, 'De huisraad', 128–34; Prims, 'De liquidatie', 181–8; Prims, *Beelden*, 332–41.

Apart from practical obstacles hindering the restitution of their goods, the refugees struggled with the psychological consequences of their reintegration. Embittered by the years of exile and exclusion, they demanded public rehabilitation. Many exiles did not intend simply to re-occupy their previous positions in society. Animated by the confessional militancy in asylum towns, the refugees sought to claim a new role for themselves, establish a reinvigorated religious order and exploit the ideas they had developed during their years of absence. In other words, they aimed for a radical purge and spiritual reformation of the entire *corpus christianum*.

### Purgation and reconciliation

Alexander Farnese skilfully incorporated this exile agenda into his own plans for the recaptured Netherlands. Burgundian and Habsburg princes had traditionally responded to urban revolts in the Low Countries with a combination of punishment and pardon.[21] Under Alba the former strategy had received more emphasis than the latter, with devastating consequences for the Habsburg cause.[22] Farnese therefore formulated a different kind of peacemaking policy, for which he received support from Philip II. First, it involved an emphasis on reconciliation, clemency and official forgetting. The precise range of these conciliatory gestures could be adapted to local circumstances. In his letters Farnese carefully avoided the word 'réduction' [re-conquest], using instead the government's new catchphrase 'réconcilation'.[23] Second, Habsburg communication under Farnese departed from the conventional message of obedience and penalty. Instead it hailed Philip II's generosity and portrayed his government as the protector of Catholic citizens against Calvinist aggression.[24] Third, in religious matters, Farnese sought to experiment with a *ius emigrandi* for dissenters, as an alternative to draconian death sentences. This 'right to migrate' was, in fact, a modified variant to the well-known *cuius regio, eius religio* principle of the Holy Roman Empire. More specifically, Farnese tended to set a period of transition, in which religious dissenters had the option either to reconcile with the king and the church, or to settle their business and leave.[25] By

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[21] Arnada, *Beggars*, 212–59; Boone, 'The Dutch Revolt'.
[22] Soen, *Vredehandel*, 79–96; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 27–70.
[23] Quoted in Soen, 'Reconquista', 20.
[24] Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 89–113.
[25] Soen, 'Reconquista', 14–8; Thijs, *Van geuzenstad*, 34–5. For the German variant see Asche, 'Auswanderungsrecht'; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 103–4, 156–62.

offering them the possibility of moving to rebel territory, the Habsburg government implicitly recognised the existence of a Protestant 'counter state' in the northern Netherlands.

It is indicative of Farnese's preference for local accommodations that the transitional phase varied: from as little as seven months, for Mechelen, to as much as four years, for Antwerp. In the latter case, the *ius emigrandi* was exceptionally long because, in Farnese's words, he did not want 'to strip this famous city, which is based on transport and trade, from its people or to rigorously expel those who live there'.[26] This leniency did not prevent a large-scale emigration in the following years, in which Antwerp lost almost half of its population. The dramatic brain drain after 1585 was a price the Habsburg government was ultimately willing to pay. It is important to note that the ideal of a religiously uniform *corpus christianum* never lost its relevance or legitimacy to Farnese. Only the method chosen to achieve this aim had shifted since the 1560s. Thus, after the capture of Ghent, Farnese characteristically argued that all heretics had to be removed from the town, 'so that they do not infect the body of the community.'[27] While Alba had carried out death sentences to enforce such uniformity, Farnese pursued reconciliation and forced migration as a means to purify communities of their religious divisions.

Such a change of strategy, rather than of principle, was particularly evident in Farnese's deployment of the Society of Jesus. Perhaps to a greater extent than his predecessors had been, Alexander Farnese was convinced that winning the hearts and minds of the Netherlanders for Catholicism was crucial to sustain Habsburg power. The Jesuits had already showed their skills in this regard in exile towns. With their emphasis on teaching the youth and engaging the laity, the Society seemed best able to galvanise a Catholic resurrection among educated lay citizens. Farnese expressed his support for the order in several ways. He pushed recently captured towns to establish Jesuit residences and made funding available for this purpose. Houses and (re)foundations thus quickly emerged in reconciled towns such as Kortrijk (1583), Ghent (1584), Ypres (1585), Antwerp (1585) and Brussels (1586).[28] To affirm his allegiance to the order, Farnese visited its improvised chapel in Antwerp within three days after his entry into the conquered city.[29] In the following weeks, he invited

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[26] Quoted in Thijs, *Van geuzenstad*, 34.
[27] Quoted in Soen, 'De reconciliatie', 356. See also De Waele, *Réconcilier*, 152–4.
[28] Poncelet, *Histoire*, I, 328, 363–76, 395–7.
[29] Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 113–4; Marinus, 'Kampioenen', 16; Thijs, *Van geuzenstad*, 68–9.

representatives of the Society to help him develop a grand strategy for the re-catholicisation of the reconciled towns.[30]

Such collaborative projects were another feature of Farnese's approach. In designing his reconciliation schemes, the governor regularly consulted local agents and clerics. His choice of advisors reflected his underlying ideas. Apart from the Jesuits, Farnese relied on members of the Capuchin order, who had a similar reputation for persuasive conversion campaigns. Tailored advice was also requested from the nuncio in Cologne, Francisco Bonomi and from exiled bishops such as Willem Lindanus (Roermond) and Remigius Driutius (Bruges). High-profile magistrates who had based themselves in Douai and St Omer, including Willem van Pamele, Nicholas Damant and Ferdinand Veranneman, likewise served as informal policy advisors.[31] Crucially, these trusted agents were all connected to the exile community and could express its concerns at the highest level of government. Their symbiotic relationship with the Farnese administration became particularly clear in three interrelated processes of administrative, spatial and social cleansing.

### Administrative cleansing

After the initial excitement about his homecoming, Gislain Bulteel soon felt that the town of Ypres was hardly showing him the respect he deserved. Bulteel even noted that some rebels and former Protestant exiles walked freely through the streets and had managed to keep their posts in the government. During a discussion with a fellow Catholic refugee it became clear that Bulteel was not the only one who felt insulted:

I even know someone who complained to me in this way: was it proper, then, for us who return [from exile] to expect this, after so much idle boredom, after so many wanderings and sad winters, that I will now see appointed rapidly to fill the senate the herald of heresy and the unworthy minister who I once saw receiving guest accommodation and being carried off with their own coach? So the price that fugitives have to pay is given in reward to the [Protestant] exiles? Is it permitted, then, to plunder the temples of the gods? To pollute the ancient faith with a foreign cult? And to shut out the king with high walls? And after this again to take up undeserved offices?[32]

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[30] ARAB, Audiëntie, 192/7, Instruction by Alexander Farnese, dated 31 October 1585. Compare Marnef, *Het calvinistisch bewind*, 327.

[31] ARAB, Audiëntie, 809/7, Correspondence regarding Bruges; 809/9, Correspondence regarding Ghent. Van Beuningen, *Wilhelmus Lindanus*, 286, 411; Foppens, *Histoire*, 70, 178–9; Vander Haeghen, 'Archives gantoises', 86–105; Marinus, *De contrareformatie*, 41–2; Soen, 'Reconquista', 15; Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen', 23–4.

[32] Bakelants, *La vie*, 469.

Bulteel's outrage at the political climate in Ypres did not last for long. The balance of power changed rapidly in the months after Farnese's victory.

In his White Paper of 1578, Willem Lindanus had advised Don Juan to use the exiles as pioneers of a new Catholic-Habsburg order.[33] His successor, Farnese, put this idea into practice. The extent of administrative renewal differed from town to town, but a clear underlying policy emerged. The royal governor ensured that all magistracies in retaken areas were purged of religious dissenters and office-holders whose loyalty was deemed questionable. Despite Bulteel's initial worries, Farnese systematically removed the (former) adherents of the Calvinist regimes. He simultaneously instructed his agents that their replacements should be 'good Catholics', whose commitment would ideally be confirmed by an exile background. Thus, when Ghent surrendered in September 1584, Willem van Pamele provided Farnese with detailed lists of candidates for office. These indicated who had been 'refugee' in previous years and hence were fit for election.[34] A similar strategy was followed that summer in Bruges. Several of Farnese's agents drafted letters of recommendation on which 'the absent ones and refugees are indicated with the letter A.'[35] Their appointment also served an exemplary purpose. Ferdinand Veranneman reasoned that the recruitment of refugees showed the local community 'that His Majesty is elevating the good Catholics to public office'.[36] In Ypres, Gislain Bulteel was among such happy few. When Antwerp was finally taken in August 1585, Alexander Farnese was again advised about those candidates 'who have been refugees in Cologne'.[37] From the margins of exile, the returning exiles thus moved to the heart of the re-established Habsburg administration.

The majority of Farnese's appointments were men who had been in office before the troubles or who could claim some political pedigree. The decisive criterion for their reappointment, however, was a stay in an asylum town or an early reconciliation with the king. Papers in Farnese's archives meticulously list the place of exile of prospective office-holders, suggesting there even existed an informal ranking among the asylum centres.[38] A willingness to take refuge in towns that either had remained

[33] See Chapter 5.
[34] ARAB, Audiëntie, 809/9, Notes by Willem van Pamele regarding the election of magistrates in Ghent, 1584.
[35] ARAB, Audiëntie, 809/7, Notes regarding the election of magistrates in Bruges, August 1584.
[36] ARAB, Audiëntie, 809/7, List of recommendations from Ferdinand Veranneman, addressed to Jean Richardot, 14 August 1584 from Bruges.
[37] ARAB, Audiëntie, 809/13.
[38] Compare lists in ARAB, Audiëntie, 809/7 (Bruges), 809/9 (Ghent), 809/13 (Antwerp), 809/18 (Brussels).

steadfastly loyal to the king or, in the case of Tournai, which had been re-captured was considered the ultimate proof of one's commitment to the royalist cause. In a few cases, Farnese's purges involved the elevation to office of *homines novi*. In post-1585 Antwerp, for example, members of some top mercantile families, including Van der Cruyce, De Simdt De Robiano and Van den Steene, were gradually absorbed into the magistracy. They all belonged to the former Cologne exile clan.[39]

Once these top positions had been refilled, purges continued at the lower levels of town governments, guilds and civic militias. Within the administrative bodies of the Council of Flanders posts were distributed among 'good Catholics, who have served in Douai'.[40] In Antwerp the town secretary, Hendrik de Moy, 'was again installed in his office by His Majesty' after his return from Cologne.[41] Farnese displayed a remarkable personal interest in these cleansing exercises. At his explicit order the organist Servaes van der Meulen was removed from his job at Antwerp Cathedral, because he had 'served the heretics' by playing 'psalms and holy hymns' during their services. Servaes was replaced by Raijmundus Waelrant, organist to the archbishop of Cologne.[42] To promote the refugees as representing a new aristocracy of the faith, it made sense to ennoble some. When Gislain Bulteel eventually received his peerage in 1600, the certificate duly recalled how during the troubles Gislain had 'abandoned all his possessions to follow the party of his late Majesty'.[43]

In ecclesiastical spheres the restored Habsburg administration applied a similar strategy. Clerics who had stayed in Cologne, Douai or St Omer in the early 1580s became the leading figures of the renewed Catholic Church of the following two decades.[44] The archbishop of Mechelen, Joannes Hauchinus, and his successor, Matthias Hovius, were among the group of top clerics who shared an exile background. Willem Lindanus, Remigius Driutius, Jacob van Pamele and Laevinus Torrentius also belonged to this exclusive club.[45] Crucially, purges in places such as Antwerp created a close connection between magistrate dynasties and the top tier of the local clerical establishment. Bishop Torrentius, for example, was related to the Van der Cruyce clan. This overlap of political,

[39] Timmermans, *Patronen*, 31–3, 50–1. Some of them had briefly been members of the Antwerp magistrate of 1579.

[40] Van Campene, *Vlaemsche kronijk*, 348–9, 354.

[41] Felix Archief, List of town secretaries. Available at www.felixarchief.be. His stay in Cologne is evident from: RAG, St Baafs, K 8490 (10185), Will of Cornelis Sfolders [sic], 21 December 1584 at Cologne. See for more examples De Pottre, *Dagboek*, 165; Marnef, *Het calvinistisch bewind*, 312–9; Van Beuningen, *Wilhelmus Lindanus*, 1.

[42] Persoons, 'Musical Culture', 86.    [43] Roux, *Recueil*, 174.

[44] Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen', 7–22 gives a number of examples.

[45] Put and Harline, *A Bishop's Tale*.

economic and ecclesiastical elites was a new phenomenon in the city. It demonstrates how loyalty to the Habsburg cause became intertwined with commitment to Tridentine Catholicism. A strong association with the refashioned church was a requirement for families with political ambitions; and among the preferred instruments to assert one's fitness in the new regime were ostentatious gifts to Catholic building projects and the entry of unmarried children in religious orders.[46]

### Spatial cleansing

If the governance of urban communities needed to be purified, so did the physical environments to which they belonged. In Brussels and Antwerp decorations that had been added to the town hall by the Calvinist government were duly removed. The coats of arms of Charles V and Philip II were returned to a re-catholicised St Baafs Cathedral in Ghent.[47] The restoration of Catholic churches was the most urgent concern of the reinstated Habsburg regime. After each successful siege, Farnese asked the local bishop to formally enter the captured town and 'reconcile the churches, desecrated by the heretics and rebels'.[48] Before church buildings could be made fit for Catholic worship, they had to be properly cleaned. This form of 'Catholic iconoclasm' became commonplace in the Low Countries. Willem Weydts explained that after the reconciliation of Bruges all Protestant churches needed to be 'cleaned of the shit and uselessness that could be found there'.[49] Purges of a similar kind were reported by Willem Jansz Verwer at Haarlem. When the town was taken in 1573, its principal church, St Bavo, was promptly and thoroughly 'purged' to make fit again for Catholic worship.[50] In Antwerp it was decided that some furniture in the Cathedral of Our Lady could stay, but only after the tainted pulpits were ritually 'chastised'.[51] In their drive for religious purity, Calvinists and Catholics thus shared an iconoclastic attitude. Church graveyards were particularly sensitive zones. Jan de Pottre remarked in March 1585 how the remains of a heretic were dug up in Brussels' St Gudele 'and put outside the church walls' in unconsecrated ground. The exhumed corpse of a Calvinist

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[46] Marinus, *De contrareformatie*, 158–9; Marnef, *Antwerp*, 56; Hendrickx, 'De reconciliatie', 79–81.
[47] De Pottre, *Dagboek*, 166; Van Campene, *Vlaemsche kronijk*, 358.
[48] ARAB, Audiëntie, 1807/2, Alexander Farnese to the bishop of St Omer, 16 April 1584 from Tournai.
[49] Weydts, *Chronique*, 144.
[50] Verwer, *Memoriaelbouck*, 114. See also Van Biesten, 'Vervolg', 455.
[51] According to Bor, *Oorsprongk*, II, 622.

minister in Ypres was simply 'thrown in the fields'.[52] Once these cleansing rituals were completed, the authorities allowed altars, relics, paintings and tapestries to be reinstalled. A reconciliation ceremony then followed, which included the singing of the *Te Deum Laudamus* during mass.[53]

These examples suggest that the Habsburg government firmly coordinated the re-catholicisation of space. Farnese's multiple instructions to 'restore' churches to their 'former glory' confirm this policy. But the top-down campaign to rebuild the religious landscape could succeed only because it received active support on the ground. Returning exiles in particular seized the opportunity to make their mark on the enterprise. What is more, these local initiatives did much more than merely reconstruct the former infrastructure. They also introduced new types of Catholic religiosity and art. The projects of Caspar van der Cruyce illustrate this goal. Briefly after his return to Antwerp, Caspar decided to join the priesthood and devote himself to the fight against heresy in the divided city. Chapels and churches that had been damaged by Protestants were Caspar's favourite preaching spots.[54] Committed to resacralise these polluted urban spaces, he made a special point of embracing the room where the Calvinist consitory used to meet in Antwerp Cathedral. The tainted environment was carefully transformed into a chapel dedicated to the protector of the refugees, St Ursula of Cologne. Funding for the decoration came from Caspar himself, who had also purchased a collection of relics for this purpose. In 1589 he travelled back to Cologne to acquire no fewer than forty boxes of holy items for his various Antwerp projects. Among them was a valuable piece of the holy cross that had been recovered from the collection of the destroyed Abbey of Egmond in Holland. Other former refugees were similarly involved in relic-trafficking. Back home they sanctified local churches with skulls, bones and locks of hair that had been collected in exile in Cologne, Trier and elsewhere.[55] Believed to be imbued with divine powers, these reminders of martyrdom became a focal point of the politicised piety of the Tridentine Church after 1585.

[52] De Pottre, *Dagboek*, 162–3; Bakelants, *La vie*, 76. The extent of these burial cleansings is unclear though. They are not explicitly mentioned in other chronicles.

[53] Examples in De Heere, 'Le manuel', 11; Weydts, *Chronique*, 144; Bakelants, *La vie*, 75–8; Van Campene, *Vlaemsche kronijk*, 344–7; De Pottre, *Dagboek*, 162–7; Van Male, *De lamentatie*, 93, 160. See also Marnef, *Het calvinistisch bewind*, 323–5; Spicer, 'After Iconoclasm', 429–33; Spicer, 'Re-building'; Soen, 'De reconciliatie', 355–6; Walsham, 'The Sacred Landscape', 204–15.

[54] Goetschalckx, *Geschiedenis*, 100–1.

[55] Donnet, *Les exilés*, 68–70; Goetschalckx, *Geschiedenis*, 100–7; Prims, *Geschiedenis*, VIII-3, 82–7; Timmermans, *Patronen*, 107.

Processions were an established instrument with which to claim public space. We know that parades constituted an important part of reconciliation ceremonies and local chronicles claimed that their reappearance in re-catholicised towns was greeted with popular approval.[56] As Margit Thøfner has shown, the reconciliation processions in Antwerp and Brussels were carefully staged performances.[57] Symbolising the urban community as a whole, they expressed the intention to forget the troublesome past and restore a sense of civic harmony. It is no wonder, then, that the returning refugees were keen to assume a visible role in them. Recently appointed magistrates and returned clerics solemnly paraded through the streets of Ghent, Brussels and Antwerp in 1585. Their participation – and the notable absence of Protestant citizens – also gave visual and spatial expression to the exiles' reintegration into local community. Early modern processions were often conceived to be symbolic representations of the entire *corpus christianum*. In reconciled towns they suitably marked the rehabilitation of the Catholic émigrés within a purified body social.

Signalling themselves as elites of the faith, the returning refugees also began a concerted campaign to promote confessional discipline. For this purpose, they copied the blueprint which had proved so successful in Douai, St Omer and Cologne. As early as 8 December 1585 Frans Coster founded a Marian sodality in Antwerp, modeled after the Cologne example. Its first members characteristically consisted of 'those who had been associated and enlisted with the same sodality, in Cologne, Douai and elsewhere, to which they had escaped because of the Catholic religion'.[58] Indeed, many of the Antwerp sodality's first members had also been enlisted, just a few years before, to the sodality in Cologne. Within a year the Antwerp branch of the Jesuit-led enterprise counted seventy *sodales*. A similar pattern could be observed in other towns. Students in Leuven who had previously stayed in Douai and Cologne established Marian sodalities in 1585.[59] Building on past experience, the male *sodales* sought to confessionalise the public realm of reconciled towns. In Antwerp the confraternity initiated a number of open-air 'conversion sessions' as well as book burnings in which everyone could join. Former exiles actively recruited relatives, friends and business partners for these well-publicised activities.[60]

[56] Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 159–64; Thijs, *Van geuzenstad*, 171–7. See also Van Campene, *Vlaemsche kronijk*, 357, 359; De Pottre, *Dagboek*, 169–70.
[57] Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 11–25.     [58] Van Lerius, *Kronyk*, 7.
[59] Poncelet, *Histoire*, II, 331.
[60] Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 178–80; Duke, *Dissident Identities*, 223–6, 246–7.

Notably, in 1586, a lobbying group of returned exiles advocated the replacement of the statue of the legendary Brabo in the central pavilion of the Antwerp town hall with a sculpture of the Virgin Mary. The provocative proposal was backed by the recently purged town government. During a series of solemn ceremonies in early 1587 the town hall's facade received a new Catholic face. Local craftsmen and civic militias were given a stake in the ritual through their participation in a preliminary procession. The *sodales* themselves performed a play in the central market square a couple of days before the 'coronation' of the statue. In an instructive booklet, Frans Coster later explained that by taking the Virgin Mary as their patron, Antwerp citizens had now 'protected themselves against the heretics who had rejected her'. Margit Thøfner asserts that the brand-new statue drew on imagery of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, one of the more extreme Marian cults within the Counter-Reformation movement. This Virgin militant exemplified the arrival of a new type of politicised Catholicism in Antwerp.[61] It consciously built on existing Marian devotion but moulded its symbolism to accommodate the new challenges of the times. Jesuit authors such as Coster, for example, compared the virginity of Mary to the purity of the embattled Catholic Church in the Netherlands. Miraculous events in the war against the rebels were ascribed directly to the Virgin's intervention. A reconceptualised Marian piety thus resided at the core of a collective fight against heresy.[62] While this bellicose spirituality was morally and financially supported by the Habsburg government, its spread was underpinned by local Catholic men and women who had made confessional militancy a marker of their identity. The exiles had turned into the mobilising forces of a new Catholic self-confidence in the south.

### Social cleansing

Reclaiming political offices and resacralising the urban landscape were not the only concerns of the exiles. Their reintegration into society also involved battles against fellow townsmen who had stripped them of their possessions, respectability and reputation. Gislain Bulteel wanted nothing less than a fundamental re-evaluation of the social order in his hometown Ypres. In a poem he expressed his resentment:

[61] Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 162–4; Bevers, *Das Rathaus*, 108–12, 172–3. For an assessment of the elaborate ceremony see Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 140–1.
[62] Duerloo and Wingens, *Scherpenheuvel*, 73–109; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 165–9; Stensland, *Habsburg Communication*, 126–30.

> Add to this that rightly will be enraged the citizens with con-
>     scious hearts,
> who observed their faith and left their ancestral houses in exile
> out of love for religion, loyal to Philip and God,
> when righteous and disloyal people are regarded without
>     difference,
> but as of the same weight.[63]

In some towns tensions between returning exiles and supporters of the previous regime ran high. In 1584, Protestants in Ghent complained that Catholic refugees who had recently been granted positions of power now imposed heavier taxes on them than they did on other citizens. Those who refused to pay the discriminatory duties were threatened with a prison sentence.[64] In reconciled Kortrijk, the Reformed population had reason to feel unsafe after a mob attacked several 'geux' on the streets at day-light.[65] The Farnese administration turned a blind eye to these incidents. The governor himself had explicitly excluded a number of Calvinist leaders from his pardon.[66] In Ghent, arrested rebels were released only on the condition that they pay for the restoration of Catholic churches.[67] This combination of officially sanctioned harassment and *ius emigrandi* policy triggered an exodus of religious dissenters from reconciled towns. In April 1585, Philip van Campene noted how in Ghent 'many Reformed, even those of old age, who cannot bear this big change, left with their possessions.'[68]

   Economic considerations provided additional incentives for emigration. The southern towns had suffered significant war damage and continued to endure wandering armies (of both parties) and trade blockades by the rebels. As a result, Antwerp's population of *c*.80,000 diminished to *c*.48,000 between 1585 and 1589. Ghent and Bruges lost about half of their respective populations.[69] A substantial proportion of these emigrants moved to rebel Holland and Zeeland, which offered attractive religious and economic conditions. It is a commonplace to state that this dramatic emigration of the later 1580s led to an economic downturn in Flanders and Brabant and posed challenges to the social fabric of desolated southern towns. But the demographic crisis also offered opportunities. It assisted the

[63] Bakelants, *La vie*, 469.
[64] Briels, *De Zuidnederlandse*, 17. (Basing himself on Emmanuel van Meteren.)
[65] De Potter, *Geschiedenis*, IV, 139–40.
[66] Aerts, 'Spanje', 39, 41; Soen, 'Reconquista'.
[67] Van Campene, *Vlaemsche kronijk*, 349–53.
[68] Van Campene, *Vlaemsche kronijk*, 353.
[69] These figures have been subject to debate. Compare Asaert, *1585*; Briels, *De Zuidnederlandse*; Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse*, 68–76; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 308–11; Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, 253–6.

cleansing project envisioned by immigrating Catholic refugees and enabled them to redefine the *corpus christianum* as a purified Catholic realm. The blossoming of Counter-Reformation identities in the Southern Netherlands after 1585 would not have been possible without the physical disappearance of thousands of men and women who opposed this type of combative Catholicism.

The forced emigration of dissenters also aided the material compensations given to returning Catholics. An agreement between Farnese and Philip II of December 1578 first addressed this policy of recompense. Recognising the need to assist his loyal subjects, the king allowed 'those who join my party' to be reimbursed with or awarded the 'confiscated goods of rebels and heretics'.[70] Farnese made creative use of this provision. Possessions of escaped rebels were systematically used to accommodate the needs of displaced Catholics. J. van Marten, for example, was given the 'furniture, books and commodities' that had been found in the house of Jean op den Berg, a fugitive rebel from Leuven. Van Marten received these goods 'to compensate for the furniture' in his own house in rebel-controlled Brussels.[71] In royalist Groningen, Johan Blankenoort was likewise granted the goods of 'big rebel and geux' Sijts Scheltema in 1582.[72] To demonstrate the 'exceptional goodness' of the king towards the refugees, Farnese promised 2,000 Flemish pounds to the homeless parish community of Bellegem, which had found a base in Kortrijk in March 1584.[73]

Such compensation schemes were also employed to finance the reconstruction of ecclesiastical property. Records from Ypres, Mechelen, Ghent and Antwerp all confirm that funds for the refurbishment of convents and churches were taken from the seized goods of escaped Protestants.[74] Jesuits in particular profited from this arrangement. Because funding for their new colleges was continually a problem, Farnese frequently called upon his discretionary means. In 1585 he promised the Antwerp College 3,000 guilders annually. Two years later, a Jesuit mission at Brussels was supported by a grant of 600 guilders, taken from forfeited properties.[75] The new training seminaries for priests

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[70] *Correspondance d'Alexandre Farnese*, 53–4.
[71] ARAB, Audiëntie, 2855, Instruction by Alexander Farnese, 8 August 1579 from Maastricht.
[72] Feith, *Register*, III, 55.
[73] ARAB, Audiëntie, 2533, Compensation to the parish community of Bellegem, March 1584.
[74] Numerous examples in ARAB, Audiëntie, 1806/4; 1807/2; 2855; 2552–2553. See also Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 113–14; Marnef, *Het calvinistisch bewind*, 323–30; Marinus, *Contrareformatie*, 41–43; Vander Haeghen, 'Archives gantoises', 88–97.
[75] Marinus, *De contrareformatie*, 50; Poncelet, *Histoire*, I, 397.

in Leuven and Douai were tellingly financed through alienated posses-sions of William of Orange in Breda and Diest.[76] In some cases, these reallocations served an additional propagandistic purpose. In Ypres, the Society of Jesus constructed its new chapel in the confiscated house of an expelled Protestant.[77] The Society's lodgings in Ghent were located in a comfortable residence on the Volderstraat, previously owned by the notorious Calvinist leader Jan van Hembyze.[78] Re-colouring of urban spaces gave visual form to the religious conversion of the towns, as had happened conversely in rebel-controlled areas. The Jesuits of Antwerp, for example, chose the ominous House of Aachen – the former meeting place of the rebellious colonels – to be the headquarters of their Marian confraternity in 1586. 'A place of the devil and his helpers' was now purified into 'a room and *oratorium* of God and His Blessed Mother Mary.'[79]

### Obstacles

As they instituted their plans with all the zeal of their religious convictions, returning exiles encountered resistance as well as acceptance. Around Easter 1586, the recently arrived Jesuits and Capuchins orchestrated a penitential procession through the streets of Antwerp. During the imposing nocturnal parade, participants flagellated themselves and had ropes tied around their necks. At the corner of streets the psalm-singing men shouted catchwords like 'compassion' and 'penalty'.[80] This type of emotional penitence and affective piety did not go down well with the clerical establishment. Representatives of the Franciscan and Dominican orders openly complained about the 'novelties' introduced by the Jesuits and Capuchins. Their infiltration into the local market for funding and charity caused frictions too.[81] Some members of the Antwerp magistracy feared that the militancy of the Society of Jesus might actually frustrate the reconciliation of religious moderates in the city.[82] In much the same way the activism of bishop Torrentius provoked opposition from the cathe-dral's canons and Antwerp's Nobertine order.[83] It was clear that the exiles had to operate within certain limits.

[76] Bor, *Oorsprongk*, II, 215. Also compare Fruin, 'De wederopluiking', 273.
[77] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 157.    [78] Poncelet, *Histoire*, I, 375–6.
[79] Van Lerius, *Kronyk*, 7–8. The order had acquired the house in 1574.
[80] Hildebrand, 'Een geeselprocessie', 8–9.
[81] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 145; Thijs, *Van geuzenstad*, 68.
[82] Timmermans, *Patronen*, 104–5.
[83] Prims, *Geschiedenis*, VIII-3, 49, 218; Valvekens, *De Zuid-Nederlandsche*, 138, 150–2, 166.

Competing views about privilege and strategy continued to grip the restored Catholic Church of the following decades – as was the case in many other parts of Europe. Particularly in the Brabantine and Flemish countryside Tridentine renewal proved a protracted affair. Archbishop Mathias Hovius, for one, met with paralysing opposition from local parish priests during his challenging tenure.[84] In a series of articles Michel Cloet has assessed what has often been called 'the obstacles' to Tridentine reform in the Southern Netherlands. Cloet has argued that the continuing war, the political instability in Brussels, a shortage of priests and the absence of an archbishop of Mechelen from 1589 to 1596 prevented the enforcement of uniformity, obedience and discipline which supposedly characterised a proper Counter-Reformation. Only after the arrival of the archdukes Albert and Isabella in 1598 and the subsequent Twelve Years' Truce of 1609–21 were these 'problems' gradually solved.[85] There is no doubt that the Counter-Reformation in the Habsburg Netherlands was a long-term development that gained momentum during the archducal regime. But the existence of a plurality of Catholic cultures in the preceding years should not necessarily be interpreted as a sign of weakness. Diversity within the Counter-Reformation movement was also one of its strengths. It made it easier, for example, to accommodate local traditions and mobilise different parties in a common fight against the Protestant Other. As a number of scholars had recently emphasised, rivalry and opposition were not only obstacles to reform: they were a source of creativity and allowed individual Catholics to gain a voice in the construction of Counter-Reformation communities.[86]

### The lasting impact of exile

The activism of the Catholic émigrés continued to have an impact on Counter-Reformation culture in the following decades. The lasting inheritance of the exile experience was particularly visible in areas of printing, sociability and art. We know that the Catholic printing industry in Antwerp made huge advances after 1585. At the start of the seventeenth century the city had established itself as one of the major producers of Tridentine propaganda in Europe. Sponsored by wealthy Catholic citizens and religious orders, the Antwerp presses offered lay Catholics unprecedented

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[84] Harline and Put, *A Bishop's Tale*.
[85] Cloet, 'De gevolgen', 53–75; Cloet, 'Algemeen verslag', 65–88. For the regime of Albert and Isabella see Duerloo and Thomas, *Albert and Isabella*; Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety*. Compare the assessment in Marnef, 'Belgian and Dutch', 289–91.
[86] Compare Laven, 'Introduction', 3–8, esp. 7.

access to affordable devotional literature and polemical pamphlets. Crucially, these works were increasingly written in the vernacular.[87] Readers continued to hear the voices of exiles in this material. The most prolific authors of the booming printing industry included former refugees such as Jan David and the great Jesuit entrepreneur Frans Coster.[88] Other imprints showed (hidden) hallmarks of exile too. Carolus Scribani's histories of Antwerp, for example, were clearly informed by his experience of exile in Cologne.[89] The portable Dutch editions of Peter Canisius' *Manual for Catholics* (1589 and later years) were dedicated to Josine de Meyere, widow of Frans van der Cruyce. In the preface, Christopher Plantin praised the exemplary piety of the heroic exile family.[90] In this way, Canisius' internationally oriented guide to everyday Tridentine spirituality was subtly connected to the local exile cult in Antwerp.

The sociability of the Marian confraternity constituted another long-term inheritance of the refugee experience. Founded alongside the Jesuit colleges, the new-style confraternity made spectacular progress in the Habsburg Netherlands after 1585.[91] By the early seventeenth century no fewer than 1,400 *sodales* were registered in one of the departments of the confraternity in Antwerp.[92] It has been estimated that by the mid seventeenth century, the Jesuit *Provincia Flandro Belgica* incorporated 90 Marian sodalities, with a total of 13,727 male members. The Walloon areas of *Gallo-Belgica* boasted 80 foundations and 11,300 *sodales*.[93] Their remarkable growth in places such as Antwerp and Lille can be explained partly by the Jesuit strategy to connect religious engagement with commercial interests and social respectability. Divided into socially distinct departments, the Marian sodalities reinforced business networks of intermarried families, provided charity to less-well-off *sodales* and served as public markers of Catholic esteem. For citizens who did not possess formal political power, the confraternity also facilitated informal lobbying with elites.[94] Some sodalities gradually adopted an internal division that

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[87] Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 141–2; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 147–53; Thijs, *Van geuzenstad*, 98–107.
[88] Porteman, 'Na 350 jaar', 209–69; Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen', 14–16, 29–37. Also compare Arblaster, *Antwerp*.
[89] Brouwers, *Carolus Scribani*, 273–93; Esser, *The Politics*, 168–82. Immigrants also played an important role in published town histories in the north.
[90] Canisius, *Handt-boeck der Catholijcken*, 3–7. Other examples include Miraeus, *Elogia illustrium*.
[91] Châttelier, *Europe of the Devout*, 30–2, 50–66; Poncelet, *Histoire*, II, 324–5.
[92] Châttelier, *Europe of the Devout*, 51; Marinus, *Contrareformatie*, 255–8.
[93] Poncelet, *Histoire*, II, 333.
[94] For Antwerp see Timmermans, *Patronen*, esp. 112–16. For Lille see Lottin, *Lille*, 127–31, 265–6.

overlapped with those of local neighbourhoods. The compiler of a history of the Jesuits in Antwerp explained how the mobilising force of the sodality resembled that of a disciplined army:

One can readily understand what power of action and what promptness of execution such an organism put at the disposal of each sodality. All the fellows were known to and were under the direction of their respective leaders. Their mobilisation for each service was certain and speedy. The whole congregation resembled a vast army; each sodality, like a military body, consisted of a dozen legions which were divided between an equal number of districts of the town, with their own leaders and deputies.[95]

While the optimistic author undoubtedly painted an idealised picture, his use of military metaphors is illustrative of the mentality of the Jesuit-led communities. As Louis Châtellier has shown, the sodalities formed a close-knit but European-wide network that stirred its members to collective Catholic action. Styling themselves as an army of the faithful, the Marian confraternities helped internationalise Catholic militancy, an effort that stemmed from the experience in Cologne, Douai, St Omer and Paris in the 1580s. Their supranational orientation was articulated through, among other things, frequent prayer sessions for Catholic victories across Europe. In 1595, the Antwerp branch organised a ceremony to express gratitude to the Virgin Mary for her recent interventions 'in Hungary against the Turks, in France against the Navarrians [supporters of Henry IV] and in Friesland against the heretics'.[96]

Building projects and devotional art illustrate the lasting legacy of exile on the religious landscape of the Southern Netherlands. M. J. Marinus has observed that in Antwerp, families with exile credentials were important funders and fundraisers of Catholic building projects after 1585.[97] Notably, the 'Cologne clan' of the city co-financed the magnificent Jesuit church of 1615–21. They also contributed to the shrine of Our Lady at Scherpenheuvel – a preeminent example of popularised Marian devotion.[98] These sponsorships also bring out some inherent tensions in the exiles' agenda. On the one hand, the returning refugees sought to reintegrate themselves into southern communities and their gifts to public building projects can be interpreted as strategies to regain their social respectability. Yet on the other hand, these investments in community building clashed with the exiles' ambition to retain something of their

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[95] Quoted in Châttelier, *Europe of the Devout*, 55.    [96] Van Lerius, *Kronyk*, 18.
[97] Marinus, *De contrareformatie*, 158–62. See also Timmermans, *Patronen*, 108–24, 135–43.
[98] Duerloo and Wingens, *Scherpenheuvel*; Thijs, *Van geuzenstad*, 72.

exclusive status as quasi-martyrs. Funeral monuments, for example, cultivated the notion of a self-styled exile aristocracy. In Ypres, the memorial to Hendrik de Codt (d. 1606) elaborately recalled his exemplary refugee experience.[99] The memorial column dedicated to Silvester Pardo (d. 1605) in Antwerp Cathedral reminded churchgoers that Silvester had spent time in Calais 'because of the faith'.[100] In the city's brand-new Jesuit church the burial monument of its sponsors, Cornelia Boot and Godefroy Houtappel, duly honoured their venerable Cologne background.[101] The prestige of exile within the Counter-Reformation movement was also evident from the campaign in 1607 to exhume and rebury the remains of Martin Rythovius. This expelled bishop of Ypres had died in exile in St Omer in 1583. A grand tomb in Ypres Cathedral memorialised Rythovius' heroic suffering during the troubles.[102]

The privately funded exile cult was gradually institutionalised in public ceremonies. Antwerp citizens with Cologne credentials held a commemorative service in the Cathedral of Our Lady in 1592. They chose the day of the Feast of Epiphany, thus evoking the protective power of the famous relic of the three Magi at Cologne. Justus Blanckwalt wrote a poem for the occasion, entitled *Gratitude of the Exiled Catholics*. To cultivate their relationship with their former place of asylum, exile families established a 'spiritual bond' between the sodalities of Cologne and Antwerp in 1609.[103] Commemorations of exile suffering also fit well with a broader appetite for martyrdom in the Counter-Reformation Church of the later sixteenth century. David Freedberg has highlighted the remarkable popularity of gruesome images of early Christian martyrs in post-1585 Antwerp and has linked their prominence to the experience of violence in the Southern Netherlands itself. The identification with officially approved martyrdom helped to sanctify the contemporary sufferings of the Netherlanders.[104] Paintings like the Van der Cruyce triptych served a similar purpose as they aimed to trigger an emotional response from viewers and to place exile into a recognisable, theological category.

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[99] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 141–2; Foppens, *Histoire*, 163–5.

[100] Goetschalckx, *Geschiedenis*, 53–4.

[101] Houtappel chapel, St Carolus Borromeus Church, Antwerp. See also Timmermans, *Patronen*, 142; Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 165–6.

[102] *BN*, XX, 725–64. See also *BN*, XVI, 526–8; *BN*, XXII, 597–619. In 1585 the corpse of Jacob Hessels, who had been killed by rebel forces in 1578, was excavated and reburied in Ghent. Foppens, *Histoire*, 150.

[103] Marinus, *De contrareformatie*, 52; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 141. Other examples in Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 18–19.

[104] Freedberg, 'The Representation', 128–38; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 157; Jonckheere, *Antwerp*, 93–9.

### Migration and religious culture

To underscore the exiles' agency in the Counter-Reformation of the Southern Netherlands is not to ignore other driving factors, such as state-sponsored propaganda and ecclesiastical reform. In fact, the tale of the Catholic refugees enables us to understand better how these more well-known forces of Catholic renewal could eventually succeed. As Judith Pollmann has recently argued, popular Counter-Reformation zeal among citizens in the Southern Netherlands was not the outcome of, but rather the prerequisite for, Tridentine reforms.[105] Netherlandish men and women became receptive to Trent's agenda after the traumatic experience of rebellion and Calvinist radicalism in the early 1580s and the introduction of a new type of clerical leadership after 1585. Jesuits in particular invested heavily in education, confraternities and print in the vernacular. They provided urban lay Catholics with the tools to reinvent themselves. Many of these initiatives had been tested in exile towns. We know that in many parts of sixteenth-century Europe internal rivalries, local customs and the resistance of traditional clerical elites hampered the promotion of Tridentine Catholicism. Such sensibilities were also common in the Low Countries. But the temporary collapse of Catholic authority during the revolt made it much easier to start reform from scratch.[106] From this perspective, the Calvinist intermezzo and the Catholic refugee crisis were blessings in disguise for the advancement of the Tridentine project in northern Europe.

This reading of the Counter-Reformation in the Habsburg Netherlands concurs with conclusions in recent scholarship. While an earlier generation of historians tended to emphasise the top-down character of Catholic reform, today scholars prefer to describe Tridentine Catholicism in terms of negotiation, accommodation and persuasion. Catholic Reformations were collaborative enterprises in which 'the middling sort' often played a brokering role. Particularly in contested areas that experienced a re-catholicisation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as the Upper Palatinate and Bohemia, local elites of towns and villages provided the backbone of religious change. These respected citizens were able to adjust governmental and ecclesiastical aspirations to desires and realities on the ground.[107] As Trevor Johnson has argued, such local intermediaries were largely responsible for Counter-Reformations 'from the middle'.[108] In the Habsburg Netherlands, returning exiles did do just that.

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[105] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*.    [106] Compare Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 5–20.
[107] Forster, *Catholic Revival*; Johnson, *Magistrates*; Louthan, *Converting Bohemia*.
[108] Johnson, *Magistrates*, 9. See also Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, esp. 197–202.

More specific to the situation in the Low Countries is the impact of large-scale migrations. The dramatic move of thousands of Protestants after 1585 allowed smaller groups of immigrating Catholics to claim a leading role in the southern towns. The Habsburg government facilitated the exiles' self-declared agency by awarding them offices and the possessions of escaping Protestants. This practice mirrored attitudes of the rebels towards Catholic property in the 1570s and 1580s. Returning Calvinists in Holland and Zeeland had previously seized jobs and houses of loyalist fugitives.[109] Hence these contrasting groups of refugees continued to use each other's possessions to build new communities and mark their own positions in society. This interactive process helps to explain the gradual division of the two Netherlands. In the north as well as in the south forces of migration transformed the social composition of urban areas. In both north and south, refugees presented themselves as the standard bearers of one of the two opposing parties, thereby fostering the creation of contrasting collective identities. The emerging sense of national consciousness in the Dutch Republic and the Habsburg Netherlands owed much to the cultural warfare of migrant activists. Parallel movements of committed Catholics and Calvinists effectively sealed the separation of the Low Countries into two distinct cultural communities.

Considering the transformative impact of migration on early modern Netherlandish society, it comes as no surprise that notions of flight, exile and displacement were widely incorporated into the religiosity of its citizens. Only in communities that had been so deeply affected by migration could exiles be styled successfully as heroes and quasi martyrs. It is telling that in the Southern Netherlands efforts to memorialise and spiritualise the exile experience were brought forth alongside campaigns to commemorate the expulsion of heretics. In a number of southern towns, annual processions were introduced after 1585 which celebrated the reconciliations and forced migrations under Farnese.[110] Existing traditions were reinterpreted for this purpose. The procession of the Blessed Sacrament of the Miracles in Brussels originally commemorated an alleged attack on the Eucharist by Jews in 1369. The anti-Semitic event was remodelled into a 'purifying procession' that linked the assumed expulsion of Jews after 1369 to the forced migration of Protestants after 1585. Frans Coster creatively connected these different examples of divinely led purgation in his 1611 book.[111]

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[109]  See Chapter 3.    [110]  *BN*, XXII, 609; Thijs, *Van geuzenstad*, 172.
[111]  Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 255–64.

The obsession with purity through expulsion among those who had been the victims of exile themselves is, of course, remarkable. It shows how much exile was internalised into devotional practices of all post-Reformation denominations. Indeed, it could be argued that the vibrant Catholic exile cult in the Southern Netherlands consciously built on symbolism and vocabulary that had previously been claimed by Calvinists, Anabaptists and Jews. The commemorative festivities of the Counter-Reformation movement were exercises in emotional management, which appropriated as much as 'othered' the religious culture of their enemies. As we will see, a strong identification with exile also characterised religious life in the northern Dutch Republic, but the different position of the Catholic minority in the United Provinces gave their particular exile cult a quite different flavour and purpose.

# 7    Negotiating diversity: the Dutch Republic

### Dutch Catholics

In January 1593, Pieter Opmeer, member of a distinguished Catholic family in Delft, drew up his will. In the presence of a notary and two witnesses he formally disinherited two of his sons, Pieter Jr and Lucas. By way of explanation, Pieter Opmeer added that both men were currently living in the Southern Netherlands, where they had 'entered the service of the King of Spain, thereby choosing sides against the United Netherlands Provinces and particularly against Holland, their fatherland, where their father, brothers, and sisters are living, and their forebears are buried.'[1] The decision of the two sons to base themselves in Habsburg territory thus marked a dramatic split in the Catholic Opmeer family.

For students of the Dutch revolt, the quarrel between Pieter Opmeer and his sons seems puzzling for at least two reasons. First, the firm disapproval by Pieter Sr contradicts the view that by the late sixteenth century the war in the Low Countries had grown into a confessional conflict in which commitment to the Church of Rome overlapped with loyalty to the Habsburg regime. We saw how in the Southern Netherlands after 1585 the resurgence of Catholic spirituality accompanied a growing identification with the Habsburg dynasty. One might expect that Catholics in the northern Dutch Republic were hoping for a speedy royal victory in their territories, too. But Pieter Opmeer thought differently about the political implications of his religious convictions. His Catholic credentials were immaculate, yet he decisively refused to accept his sons' allegiance to the king of Spain. Moving to royal territory constituted an act of treason towards the Dutch Republic: a new, officially Protestant polity that Opmeer nevertheless regarded as his ancestral 'fatherland'.[2]

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[1] EAD, Oud Notarieel Archief Delft, 1536, 10, Will of Pieter Opmeer, 27 January 1593.
[2] About the evolving notion of 'patria' in the Low Countries see Duke, *Dissident Identities*, esp. 9–76; Stein and Pollmann, *Networks*.

Pieter Opmeer's views are remarkable for a second reason. While he unequivocally rejected the move of his sons, he himself had done something similar two decades earlier. When the town of Delft had opened its gates to rebel troops in 1572, Pieter escaped to royalist Amsterdam.[3] His years in exile had even inspired him to compose a martyrology of Catholic victims of rebel violence.[4] Twenty years after this refugee experience, Pieter Opmeer apparently took the view that exile was no longer a respectable option for Dutch Catholics. Hence not only does the case of the Opmeer family present us with contrasting Catholic views on the issue of loyalty and flight in the emerging Dutch Republic, it also suggests that these views shifted during the course of the revolt.

Catholic culture in the Northern Netherlands has long been the subject of scholarly debate. It is a commonplace that the development of Catholicism in the United Provinces does not sit comfortably with the traditional narrative that has often been asserted about the post-Tridentine Church. In contrast to their co-religionists in surrounding states, Dutch Catholics lacked governmental support and were deprived of parish churches, diocesan facilities and ecclesiastical incomes. Excluded from civic power, they represented a marginalised faith within an officially Protestant republic. Still, these obstacles did not prevent Catholicism from thriving in the Northern Netherlands. By the mid-seventeenth century about a third of their population were adherents of the Church of Rome. Historians of a previous generation sought to explain this seeming paradox by portraying Dutch Catholics as devout defenders of an embattled underground church.[5] Fierce repression by the Calvinist Dutch Republic had bred a resilient, martyred and typically 'Dutch' Catholic community. In more recent decades a toleration paradigm in scholarship has replaced the older narrative of victimhood. Historians now contend that the Dutch Republic may have been Protestant in its outlook, but its population consisted of a variety of religious minorities. The extent to which these rival faiths could express themselves varied according to time and place, but religious coexistence was an accepted living condition in the United Provinces. Catholics constituted an integral, if unprivileged, part of this multi-confessional society.[6]

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[3] Pieter Opmeer returned to Delft in 1577: EAD, Oud Archief Delft, 388, Register of returned refugees, 12 May 1577.

[4] Pieter Opmeer's *Historia Martyrum Batavicorum* was published in 1625. Vermaseren, 'De bronnen', 93–108; Van Nierop, *Treason*, 246–57; Peer, 'Een 17e-eeuwse carmelites', 59–62.

[5] See the classic work by Rogier, *Geschiedenis*. Assessments of this historiography in Frijhoff, 'Shifting Identities', 1–17; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 14–20.

[6] Hsia and Van Nierop, *Calvinism*; Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief*, 39–66, 153–80; Kooi, *Calvinists*, 1–14; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 1–23.

The dispute within the Opmeer family shows that these opposing historiographical views are not mutually exclusive. Already at the time, there existed competing visions among northern Catholics about their relationship to the rebel state, the Habsburg monarchy and the Church of Rome. There were no blueprints for a Catholic underground church, nor clear guidelines for life in a religiously mixed environment. A chronic shortage of priests forced local Catholic men and women to improvise, adjusting Tridentine models to their lived experience. Former exiles such as Pieter Opmeer played a pivotal role in these Catholic lay subcultures. Other émigrés preferred to stay in exile for the rest of their lives. In both sorts of communities, the legacy of exile shaped the face of new Catholicism.

### Reinventing *corpus christianum*

To appreciate the opposing and shifting views among Catholics in rebel territory, we need to consider the fluid character of the Dutch revolt itself. By 1581 Catholic worship had been abolished in all rebel-controlled areas. At the same time Catholics were banned from holding any public office. These bold decisions had principally been instituted as a safety measure against loyalist conspiracies, rather than a genuine attempt to convert or expel all Catholic citizens.[7] After all, Catholics – in their various guises – still constituted a majority of the population. It is illustrative that the Union of Utrecht of 1579 had left some room for flexibility. More specifically, its 13th clause stipulated that 'each individual enjoys freedom of religion and no one is persecuted or questioned about his religion.'[8] Quite how this ambiguous arrangement was to be understood in practice remained an open question. It generally meant that in the northern rebel provinces, which came to constitute the Dutch Republic, Catholics were allowed to practise their faith in private. In exchange for regular payments, local authorities also tended to turn a blind eye to informal religious gatherings. Catholic services were typically organised in homes: this was an open secret. A carefully crafted distinction between public and private spheres thus developed. Religious toleration in the newborn Dutch Republic was a continual process of negotiating diversity, never a fixed condition.[9]

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[7] Knuttel, *De toestand*, 1–45; Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief*, 112–13.

[8] Translation taken from Kossmann and Mellink, *Texts*, 170. The original Dutch text is in Groenveld and Leeuwenberg, *De Unie*, 34–5.

[9] The literature on this topic has expanded in the past decade. See overviews in Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief*; Hsia and Van Nierop, *Calvinism*; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*; Pollmann, *Religious Choice*; Spohnholz, 'Confessional Coexistence', 47–74. Good overviews of the position of Catholics are offered in Kooi, *Calvinists* and Parker, *Faith on the Margins*.

The vaguely formulated legislation inevitably led to local variations. We saw how the so-called Calvinist republics in Flanders and Brabant had sought to eradicate Catholicism altogether in the 1580s.[10] Here, the concept of *corpus christianum* was redefined in confessional, Reformed terms. Attempts to calvinise society never really got off the ground in the northern provinces, though. Particularly in Holland, urban authorities generally pursued an accommodating strategy after the turmoil of the 1570s and 1580s, allowing Catholics to participate in an inclusive *corpus christianum*. In Haarlem, for example, local elites consciously promoted a civic symbolism that transcended religious divisions. Emblems on public buildings avoided confessional sensitivities, expressing instead very general Christian values.[11] The notion of a religiously neutral body social was furthered in public festivals that evoked local historical myths with which all citizens could identify. This pragmatic approach to the problem of religious disunity was not merely the result of top-down policy. Historians have found similar practices in local neighbourhoods, guilds and urban corporations. In this way citizenship, both formal and imagined, became non-confessional in many areas of the Dutch Republic.[12]

How can we explain this departure from the commonly held ideal of religious uniformity in society? There is little evidence that Dutch authorities ever sought to implement an ideologically based belief in 'tolerance' in their nascent state. It is increasingly evident that a religious *modus vivendi* emerged due to practical necessity. What is more, this practice of toleration was, in fact, a local variant of religious accommodations found elsewhere in post-Reformation Europe.[13] The improvised Dutch model was shaped by four specific concerns. First, the official Protestant Church of the United Provinces was in a weak position as it struggled to win the support of a majority of the population. From the start of the revolt in 1572, a well-organised Calvinist minority had aimed to replace the Roman Church order with a Reformed regime. Returning refugees from Emden, London and elsewhere played an important part in this campaign. These Calvinists advocated an exclusive and thus pure religious community, whose members had to submit to consistorial discipline. Yet the adoption of this strict theocratic model did not go down well with religious moderates, including the followers of other strands of Protestantism. In a much-quoted report of 1587, the States of Holland

[10]  See Chapter 2.
[11]  Frijhoff, 'Religious Toleration', 27–52; Kooi, *Calvinists*, 90–129; Spaans, *Haarlem*, 195–9; Spaans, 'Violent Dreams', 149–66.
[12]  Kaplan, *Calvinists*, 291–4. Compare Prak, 'The Politics', 159–76.
[13]  Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*.

assumed that less than ten per cent of its population formally belonged to a Reformed congregation.[14] In the next decades this number increased, but slowly. It was clear, then, that the privileged Calvinist minority could claim the exclusive right to worship in the Republic's church buildings, but could not impose its confessional agenda on the entire population.

Second, the acceptance of religious diversity in the Dutch Republic stemmed from the memory of painful past experiences. Religious toleration may not have been a deliberate choice of the Dutch, but the rejection of religious persecution certainly was. The memory of Habsburg heresy laws made citizens suspicious towards any new measures that smacked of 'inquisition'. By allowing individual freedom of conscience within an officially Protestant state, the Dutch rebels sought to keep the ideal of civic unity intact. Opposing a policy of confessional coercion could even stem from xenophobia. Many Holland elites associated the theocratic tendencies of Reformed congregations with the influence of 'foreigners', particularly Calvinist immigrants from Brabant and Flanders. The Amsterdam burgomaster Cornelis Pietersz Hooft argued that 'the management of affairs' should be in the hands of 'persons of a prudent, steady, and peaceable disposition, which qualities, I believe, prevail more among the natives than among those who have come here to live from other lands.'[15] Confessionalism, favoured by either a Spanish-Catholic monarch or by Flemish-Calvinist immigrants, was therefore framed as something 'alien' to Holland's alleged traditions.[16]

Third, attempts to enforce religious unity failed due to the awkward political organisation of the rebel state. The Dutch revolt partly originated in opposition against Habsburg monarchical reform, yet the foundation of an independent republican polity was entirely unintended. As a result, its improvised administrative structure gave local towns and provinces a great deal of autonomy. The Union of Utrecht famously stated that unity of government could never be imposed if it conflicted with 'the special and particular privileges, freedoms, exemptions, laws, statutes, laudable and traditional customs, usages and all other rights of each province and of each town, member and inhabitant of those provinces'.[17] In such a highly decentralised polity, the formulation of a comprehensive religious policy was impossible. It is illustrative that the Amsterdam authorities simply refused to publish a placard of the States of Holland that sought to curb Catholic worship in 1589. The magistrates argued they

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[14] Duke, *Reformation*, 269–79; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 365; Van Deursen, *Bavianen*, 128–60.

[15] Quoted from Kaplan, 'Dutch Religious Tolerance', 13.

[16] Kaplan, 'Dutch Religious Tolerance', 9–17.    [17] Kossmann and Mellink, *Texts*, 166.

Table 1 *Urban growth in Holland (estimates)*[18]

| Town | 1570 | 1600 | 1622 |
|------|------|------|------|
| Amsterdam | 25,000 | 60,000 | 105,000 |
| Leiden | 15,000 | 26,000 | 44,500 |
| Haarlem | 16,000 | 30,000 | 39,500 |
| Enkhuizen | 7,500 | 17,000 | 22,000 |
| Rotterdam | 7,000 | 12,000 | 19,500 |
| The Hague | 5,000 | 10,000 | 15,750 |

would consider issuing the proclamation only if they were entitled to 'modify' and 'moderate' the penalties prescribed.[19]

This strong attachment to local autonomy also points to a fourth issue that preoccupied Dutch communities in the later 1580s and 1590s. Following the Habsburg *reconquista* of the south, the towns of Holland and Zeeland were confronted with massive immigration. The influx of southerners coincided with the arrival of thousands of Scandinavians, Germans and others, who were likewise drawn to the favourable economic and religious conditions in Holland. Table 1 reveals the consequences of these various migrations. By the early 1600s, at least a third of the population of places such as Amsterdam, Haarlem and Leiden consisted of immigrants. Hence Holland society in the 1580s and 1590s was in a state of continuous transition. The large numbers of newcomers contributed to the economic boom of the Dutch 'golden age', but their varied geographical, cultural and religious backgrounds also caused friction. No wonder, then, that urban authorities were often more concerned with preserving peace in these rapidly changing communities than with imposing religious uniformity.

### Returning refugees in the north

The pragmatic, accommodating approach to religious diversity also changed the attitude of many Catholic refugees. After the confusion of the 1570s and 1580s, it became clear that living conditions had significantly improved in rebel areas, particularly Holland.[20] Hopes for reunions with relatives and friends prompted some Catholic exiles to contemplate a

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[18] Based on Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 328. See also Van Lottum, *Across the North Sea*, 24–53; Kuijpers, *Migrantenstad*.
[19] Wagenaar, *Amsterdam*, IV, 84.
[20] Kooi, 'Paying off the Sheriff', 87–101; Van Nierop, 'Sewing the Bailiff', 102–11.

return to rebel territory. Financial considerations served as an additional incentive because few refugees could afford long-term exile. We have seen that the Habsburg government encouraged a resettlement of Catholic émigrés in the recaptured Southern Netherlands after 1585, but this was an option not all northern Catholics were willing or able to pursue. A first group of exiles therefore cautiously returned to their native homes in rebel territory after the conclusion of the Pacification of Ghent in 1576. Wouter Jacobsz was among them:

On 12 [June, 1577] I changed my habit and travelled to Gouda, which I succeeded in reaching safely by God's grace. No one harmed me; indeed I was received with much affection even by those who are considered to be strong supporters of the Beggars [rebels].[21]

In much the same vein was Adriaan Jansz positively surprised. After several years of exile in Utrecht he was 'very satisfied and totally pleased' with his return to The Hague in 1577.[22] But resettling in an officially Protestant environment turned out to be a mixed experience. In many Holland and Zeeland towns the rebel regime required that returning Catholic refugees swear a loyalty oath to them. They also had to recognise William of Orange as lawful stadholder. The wording of the oath as well as the very act of publicly proclaiming one's allegiance to Protestant rebels was deemed humiliating.[23] Some refugees tried to avoid the ceremony, by stating they had already pledged an oath elsewhere.[24] In places such as Hoorn, returning refugees were also compelled to pay a fee. Once they had met these conditions, repatriating Catholics discovered their former religious world had changed dramatically. Wouter Jacobsz could hardly believe his eyes when he walked through the streets of Gouda:

I saw great desolation in the religious houses and churches, which were for the most part destroyed or sacked. ... I came across many good people, who were pining away with grief. They practised their religion by going early in the morning on feast-days to the churchyard to process about the church or enter the church in order to make their silent devotions in the choir-stalls, but they would not remain if the Calvinists did anything there.[25]

Gouda was known for its leniency towards Catholics.[26] Still, Wouter found their spiritual living conditions appalling. Equally shocking was

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[21] *DWJ*, II, 669.      [22] Quoted in Smit, 'Bijdrage', 178.

[23] See registers in EAD, Oud Archief Delft, 388, List of returning refugees at Delft, 1576–80; RAL, Stadsarchief II, 1369, Register of returning refugees at Leiden, 1576–80. Compare Bor, *Oorsprongk*, I, 741; *DWJ*, II, 717.

[24] For example Claes Buyck from Amsterdam who arrived in Delft in 1579. EAD, Oud Archief Delft, 388, Register of returning refugees, 1576–80.

[25] *DWJ*, II, 669.      [26] Hibben, *Gouda*, 101–29; Kooi, *Calvinists*, 33, 90–1.

the behaviour of priests and nuns who had not gone into exile in previous years. 'I found many religious,' Wouter noted with dismay, 'who had given themselves over to disorderly living, having entered into marriage, keeping bad company and being much disposed to heresy.' A subsequent visit to Leiden proved an almost surreal experience:

On 2 [July] it was the feast of the Visitation of Our Lady and I went then to look round the whole town [of Leiden], but I could find no sign anywhere that it was a holy day. The tradesmen were all at work and the shops were everywhere open. Business was done and everyone behaved as though it were a working-day. All good government has been thus overturned by Calvin.[27]

The remigration of Catholics in 1576–77 was partly driven by the prospect of a restitution of annotated properties. Fugitives who took an oath to the rebel regime could reclaim their houses and possessions in Holland and Zeeland. Town officials generally executed this scheme with care, conscious not to alienate Catholic moderates.[28] But not all refugees could count on a fair treatment. Some goods had been sold or given away to Protestant exiles, and some had been destroyed. Jan Jansz de Huyter found his magnificent townhouse at Delft occupied by rebels. An endless, and eventually unsuccessful, series of law suits followed. His descendants gave up their fight only in 1642.[29]

The restitution policy also did not extend to the property of ecclesiastical institutions. After all, the Catholic Church order had been abolished. The rebel government considered itself the new owner of all secularised Catholic assets. Most magistracies in Holland pursued a cautious approach when dealing with the practical implications of these sensitive forfeitures. As a rule, the few remaining male and female religious were allowed to stay in their convents and claim a pension from the new owner, the town government.[30] In exchange for these alimentation payments the religious had to limit their public visibility, respect the authority of the new regime and promise not to accept any new novices. Their marginalised religious world would gradually die out. All the same, this arrangement led to awkward situations. William of Orange's improvised court at Delft, for example, was based in the seized convent of St Agatha. Its chapel was used for Calvinist services, but other parts of the complex remained occupied by Catholic nuns. At the time of

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[27] *DWJ*, II, 670.   [28] Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 152.
[29] Tuin, 'Het gemeenlandshuis', 64–67. De Huyter returned to Delft in March 1577. EAD, Oud Archief Delft, 388, List of returning refugees, 1576–80.
[30] Van Beeck Calkoen, *Onderzoek*, 35–71, 207–27; Mol, 'Kloostergoederen', 87–97; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 191–8; Van der Schueren, 'Bijdrage', 48–108.

Orange's assassination, in 1584, the religiously segregated building still housed twenty-nine female religious. The last of these nuns died at the age of 100 in 1640.[31] Similar arrangements existed elsewhere in Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland and Overijssel. Local Dutch authorities continued to provide regular payments to Catholic religious well into the seventeenth century.[32] Hence the Protestant Dutch Republic partly financed the needs of its repressed Catholic subculture.

### Persevering in exile

Some Catholic exiles regarded the set conditions for return to be unacceptable. Particularly those who were closely attached to the Habsburg administration or had been involved with Jesuit enterprises in Cologne and Douai refused to conform to the rules of what they regarded as a dubious regime. At the same time, rebel authorities indicated that return would be denied to banished individuals whose loyalty was deemed doubtful. It is telling that the figureheads of some of Holland's great Catholic patrician dynasties, such as Buyck, Occo and Bam from Amsterdam, Drenckwaert from Dordrecht and Sasbout from Delft, all remained permanently in exile.[33] This was also true for the likes of Jan Gerritsz Stempelse, who had embraced militant Catholicism during his years in exile. These men claimed that the vaguely described 'freedom of conscience' in the Republic was an affront to Catholicism. It ignored the fact that being a Catholic implied a communal way of living, not just an individual way of thinking. More specifically, the arrangement fell short of meeting the most elementary spiritual needs of Catholics: receiving the sacraments and worshipping in public.[34] A considerable proportion of the exile community, including members of most monastic foundations, preferred a permanent resettlement in Catholic lands over life among heretics.[35] The shifting course of the war did, however, affect the geographical orientation of these persevering exiles. Over the course of the 1580s and 1590s, many families moved from foreign asylum centres to recaptured Antwerp, Brussels or Leuven. The Southern

[31] Van Nierop, 'Delft: Prinsenhof', 57–9.
[32] See examples in RAL, Stadsarchief II, 3384; Archieven kloosters, 1669–1673; UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 295; UA, Karthuizerklooster Nieuwlicht, 385; Cerutti, *De 'Haerlemsche Augustyn'*, 20–1, 29; Streng, *Stemme*, 329; Wagenaar, *Amsterdam*, IV, 28.
[33] De Bont, 'Delftsche vluchtelingen', 304–7; Dudok van Heel, 'Waar waren', 13–53; Van Heel, 'Een weinig bekende', 119–21; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 161–8.
[34] Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 9–10.
[35] Arblaster, 'The Southern Netherlands', 128–33; Schoutens, *Geschiedenis*, 76, 117; Spaans, *De levens*, 63.

Netherlands thus developed into the new epicentre of a northern exile community.

Alexander Farnese facilitated the integration of the northern loyalists in the Habsburg-controlled provinces in several ways. Some expelled magistrates assimilated into the Brussels bureaucracy, particularly its chambers of accounts. Former bailiff of Dordrecht Jan Drenckwaert, for example, became royal treasurer in 1588.[36] Others were elevated to noble status, thereby honouring their enduring loyalty to the king and venerable exile credentials.[37] The distribution of royal pensions was another means to recompense the émigrés. It is striking that the Habsburg government cultivated the fiction that royal authority still held sway in the north. In 1586–87 Farnese appointed four exiles to 'His Majesty's Chamber of Accounts in Holland', defying the rebel control of most of its jurisdiction.[38] This combination of wishful thinking and stubborn denial typified the mindset of many uncompromising exiles after 1585. Wills of the 1580s and 1590s continued to include gifts to Catholic institutions that were supposed to be reinstalled in the north after a Habsburg recovery.[39]

The resilient exile community occasionally received new members. Rebel successes at Breda (1590), Zutphen, Deventer, Nijmegen (1591) and Groningen (1594) triggered migrations of Catholic religious and loyalist office-holders to the south. Rumours about Catholic conspiracies sparked local expulsions of suspicious citizens in 1585–86.[40] But the rate of exile remained slow in comparison to that of the 1570s. The diminishing appeal of exile among lay Catholics suggests the impact of religious accommodations in the Dutch Republic. Only a small minority of hard-line believers regarded 'freedom of conscience' as an unacceptable compromise or doubted the moral legitimacy of a multi-confessional, republican society. Hugo Bonte from Middelburg, for example, moved to Antwerp in November 1585. 'I wish to live and die in the Catholic

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[36] Van Durme, *Les archives*, I, 431; Van Heel, 'Een weinig bekende', 120; Van de Pas, 'De rekenkamers', 126–41. The papal nuncio in Cologne, Ottavio Frangipani, also lobbied for exiles. Brom and Hensen, *Romeinsche bronnen*, 358, 706. In ecclesiastical spheres a similar pattern can be observed. The expelled parish priest from Delft Johan Faber, for example, received a new position at the court of the bishop of Tournai. UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 505–506; Vermaseren, *De katholieke*, 166–7.

[37] Examples in Roux, *Recueil de la noblesse*, 55–75.

[38] Van de Pas, 'De rekenkamers', 135–41. See also Dudok van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse*, I, 68, 90.

[39] UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 389, 460; NA, Heereman, 346, 350, 359, 365, 461; Tresoar, Eysinga, 2985.

[40] NA, Cousebant, 1098, list of expelled citizens from Utrecht, 1586. Kaplan, *Calvinists*, 166; Dudok van Heel, 'Waar waren', 36–42; Knuttel, *De toestand*, 34–45.

Apostolic Roman religion', he proclaimed to Alexander Farnese, 'and under the protection and obedience of his Majesty.' To do so Bonte was willing to sacrifice 'all his belongings in Holland and Zeeland'.[41]

Although the scale of these piecemeal migrations from the north to the south is hard to establish, it is telling that between 1585 and 1589 only ten northern Catholics applied for citizenship in Antwerp.[42] A high-profile case concerned the transfer of Leiden professor Justus Lipsius to Leuven in 1591–92. His academic and spiritual reconversion under Jesuit guidance was widely publicised, but not many northern Catholics followed his example. Polemicist Franciscus Dusseldorpius was among the few who left the Dutch Republic in the early seventeenth century. From his chosen base in Emmerich and Cologne, Dusseldorpius styled himself as sustaining a revered Catholic tradition of exile-martyrs.[43] The Amsterdam map-making family Van Langren emigrated to Brussels in 1609, reportedly 'for religious reasons', and Hendrik Florisz van Langren indeed articulated his political engagement in his works. Conscious of the propaganda value of printed maps, his 1594 plan of the province of Holland provocatively featured the coat of arms of Philip II [Fig. 8].[44]

### Exile spirituality

The growing north-south divide shaped the lives and world views of the steadfast exiles. After 1585, the rhetoric of war was increasingly marked by a geographical terminology that sought to 'other' those living across the military border. For Catholic pamphleteers in the south, 'Holland' became synonymous for deceit and heresy. Propagandists in the north accused the southerners of being 'hispanicised'.[45] Travel restrictions reinforced this cultural cleavage. After the capture of Antwerp, trade blockades and complicated passport procedures prevented regular exchanges between rebel and royal territory. Claes Buyck, a student at Douai, expended great effort in December 1586 to visit his eighty-year-old grandfather in Holland. The Buyck family could boast an impeccable Catholic reputation, but contacts between the northern and southern branches of the family were difficult

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[41] ARAB, Audiëntie, 1830/4, Reconciliation request by Hugo Bonte, November 1585. The recent fall of Antwerp may have influenced Bonte's move.

[42] Arblaster, 'The Southern Netherlands', 133. More examples in ARAB, Audiëntie, 1830/4; Arblaster, 'The Southern Netherlands', 130–4; Bauwens, 'Religieuze co-existentie', 22; Kaplan and Pollmann, 'Conclusion', 256.

[43] Dusseldorpius, *Uittreksel*, xiv–xxxii.

[44] Reproduced in De Meer, *Het zeekaartenboek*, 48.

[45] For this development see Andriessen, De *jezuïeten*, esp. 161–6, 229–52; Pollmann, 'No Man's Land', 241–60; Porteman, 'Na 350 jaar', 240–1; Van Zuilen, 'The Politics', 61–78.

Figure 8  Hendrik Florisz van Langren, Map of Holland with the coats of arms of Philip II, 1594. Maritiem Museum Rotterdam.

during Farnese's tenure. In 1588, exile Johan van Eynde had to ask the royal governor for permission to bring some of his goods to Cologne via rebel territory.[46] Judith Pollmann has shown how exile families on both sides felt culturally alienated when the authorities finally lifted the restrictions on border crossing during the Twelve Years' Truce of 1609–21.[47] Although both parties cherished the ideal of an unbroken 'Netherland', the decades of war had in fact encouraged the Netherlanders to internalise contrasting 'northern' and 'southern' identities for themselves and their enemies.

The exiles' devotional preferences bring out these sensibilities particularly well. As self-styled victims of heretical persecution, the Catholic émigrés from the north eagerly adopted the politicised piety of the Southern Netherlands. Notably, they collected relics of Catholic martyrs of the war and rescued sacred objects that had escaped Protestant violence. The exiles' dedication to the nineteen Franciscan priests who had been murdered at Brielle in 1572 is a case in point.[48] Numerous other relics

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[46] These and many other examples in ARAB, Audiëntie, 1830/4.
[47] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 181–91.
[48] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 290–312; De Lange, *De martelaren*, 263–65; Vroom, *In tumultu gosico*, 10–32.

from the northern Netherlands were smuggled to southern asylum centres in the later sixteenth century. The skull of St Justus from Zutphen, for example, ended up in Antwerp after a tour along several exile hotspots. In Brussels, as well as Kalkar and Emmerich in Cleves – precisely the areas where the émigrés banded together – similar artefacts from the north were venerated.[49] The fact that some recovered items had been damaged by war and iconoclasm did not deter the exiles from worshipping them.[50] On the contrary, the remarkable resilience of these holy objects confirmed their intercessory powers. The frequent miracles attributed to displaced relics helped convince Catholic refugees that they were not fighting a lost cause.

A strong attachment to the cult of relics within the exile community also fit well with broader tendencies within the Catholic Church. The Tridentine movement of the later sixteenth century spurred a renewed appreciation of (authenticated) relics and early Christian martyrdom. The devotion to sacred objects that had defied heretical destruction thus linked the exiles' spiritual needs to the agenda of the universal church.[51] The popularity of recovered relics from the north can also be explained by the fact that their 'suffering' and displacement suitably echoed the experiences of the émigrés themselves. Their tales aligned the exiles' own stories with recognised sanctity. What is more, traditional Catholic doctrine contended that relics and bodily remains constituted an intrinsic part of a whole; of a physical as well as sacred body. The dispersal of relics across asylum towns thus symbolised the notion of a scattered yet unified body of exiles.[52]

Material culture from the lost northern provinces served a similar, therapeutic purpose in the south. In Douai, for example, Dutch exiles and students venerated the *Beata Maria Hollandica*, an effigy of the Virgin Mary from the beguinage at Leiden, which had miraculously survived iconoclasm.[53] The Bam family from Amsterdam took several altarpieces and a precious monstrance to their asylum in Kalkar [Figs 1, 2, 3]. These remnants of a lost Catholic world were subsequently bequeathed to Kalkar's parish church of St Nicolas, which fortuitously but appropriately shared the name of the patron saint of Amsterdam.[54] In this gathering place of the exile community, a collection of displaced pre-Reformation objects were put into the

[49] Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief*, 111, 114; Frijhoff, 'St Justus' hoofd'; Wingens, *Over de grens*, 22, 48.
[50] Walsham, *The Reformation*, 173.
[51] Compare Corens, 'Saints beyond Borders'; 'Lazure, 'Possessing the Sacred', 58–93; Kamen, *The Escorial*, 217–22; Walsham, *The Reformation*, 153–232.
[52] Corens, 'Saints beyond Borders'; Clossey, *Salvation*, 220–4; Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 177–216.
[53] Viaene, 'Vlaamse vluchtelingen', 18.
[54] Dudok van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse*, I, 87–109; Dudok van Heel, 'Een koopliedenpatriciaat', 25–6; De Werd, *St. Nicolaikirche*, 25–7.

Figure 9 Epitaph painting of Jacob Buyck, 1599–1605. Museum Ons'Lieve Heer op Solder, Amsterdam.

service of a new Counter-Reformation spirituality. Burial monuments recalling the injustice of dispossession and expulsion, such as that of Jacob Buyck at Emmerich, epitomised this idiosyncratic exile cult [Fig. 9].[55]

[55] De Bont, 'Delftsche vluchtelingen', 304–307; De Bont, *Genealogische*, 62, 75–99; Gnirrep, 'De bibliotheek', 336.

Despite their uncompromising attitude towards the Dutch Republic, many northern exiles kept dreaming of a return home. Some expressed a wish to be buried in their former parish churches. Although these sacred spaces were now polluted by heresy, they were still considered holy ground and were the sites of the graves of the exiles' ancestors. Authorities in the Dutch Republic had no objections against Catholic burials in their churches because they regarded the buildings as public spaces. Churches in the United Provinces were open to all, even though their interiors had been altered to exclusively accommodate Reformed worship. It followed that Catholic funerals were allowed but had to refrain from performing openly 'papist rites'. Decorations on tombstones were religiously neutral.[56] This flexibility even applied to Catholic loyalists who had been banished in perpetuity by the rebel government. In 1587 and 1588, for example, the bodies of Sybrant Occo and Joost Buyck were solemnly returned to Amsterdam. After the lives of each had concluded with a decade of exile, the bodies of both men were interred in the Nieuwe Kerk. At Buyck's request the bells of both of the town's parish churches were rung.[57] Other exiles had more mixed feelings about conducting funeral ceremonies in protestantised buildings. Christiaen van Adrichem in Cologne insisted that he be buried 'in consecrated earth' and 'according to the old manners and ordinances of the holy catholic Roman church'.[58] In his will of 1595, Hans Roorda expressed the wish that one day the remains of his wife, daughters and son, all of whom had died in exile, would be reburied in the church of their village, Hennaard in Friesland. But a return to the soil of their ancestors should only happen 'with Catholic prayers and funeral rites, if it could somehow be done in a Catholic way'.[59]

### Competing Catholic views

If burial space proved to be a sensitive issue, the question of staying in exile divided the Catholic community, too. The above-mentioned will of Pieter Opmeer already demonstrated how discussions about loyalty and migration split families in the 1590s. It would therefore be misleading to construct a single Catholic mentality in the United Provinces, as

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[56] Pollmann, 'Burying the Dead', 93–8.
[57] Dudok van Heel, 'Werd de in 1578 verbannen', 97–100; Kannegieter, 'De Alteratie', 198–201.
[58] UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 460, Will of Christiaen van Adrichem, 11 June 1585. For practical solutions regarding the use of consecrated earth see Pollmann, 'Burying the dead'.
[59] '[C]um suis Catholicis precibus et exequiis, si ullo modo fieri possit Catholice'. Tresoar, Eysinga, 2985, Will of Hans Roorda, 21 April 1595. It is unclear if Roorda was still in exile in 1595. Compare Bergsma, *Tussen gideonsbende*, 483; Zijlstra, 'Studying Abroad', 303.

some scholars in the past have tried to do. As was the case with Catholics in Elizabethan England, attitudes towards the Protestant state varied, shifted and were often ambiguous.[60] Attempts to label them within clear categories often tell us more about the preoccupations of regulating authorities at the time than the thoughts and anxieties of individual Catholics. Practices of compromise and toleration could coexist with expressions of religious exclusivity and militancy. It is worthwhile, however, to try and identify some of the underlying concerns that guided the responses of individual Catholics.

We saw how Tridentine publicists in the Southern Netherlands tried to foster a connection between loyalties to the Church of Rome and to the Habsburg state. This line of propaganda also reached the Dutch Republic and struck a chord with at least some of its recipients. It is notable that a number of wealthy Catholics in Amsterdam refused to contribute to collections for the war in 1585.[61] Priests generally took the view that the king of Spain remained the lawful sovereign.[62] But the narrative of a confessional war was difficult to sell in a society where Catholics still maintained respectable positions in the body politic. Despite an official ban on office holding, many Catholic elites retained their posts after 1581, particularly in rural areas. Others exerted informal influence on decision-making processes. As a rule, guilds, civic militias and other urban corporations remained open to people of all Christian faiths.[63] Some Catholics even served in the Republic's armies. Particularly in Holland, town governments had been conscious not to estrange moderate Catholic citizens. Prescribed oaths of loyalty tended to avoid religious sensitivities. Claiming one's allegiance to the Dutch Republic involved an explicit declaration against 'Spain', not against Catholicism.[64]

In these circumstances, most northern Catholics accepted the legitimacy of the rebel regime, albeit reluctantly. After the surrender of Antwerp in 1585, for example, Catholics in a number of Dutch towns publicly asserted their allegiance to the United Provinces. They pledged 'to behave as good citizens and subjects' and inform the local authorities about anyone

[60] Holmes, *Resistance*; Questier, *Catholicism*, esp. 157–69; Shagan, *Catholics*; Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, 177–88.
[61] Dudok van Heel, 'Waar waren', 42–8.
[62] Andriessen, *De jezuïeten*, 255–6; Fruin, 'De wederopluiking', 277–80; Knuttel, *De toestand*, 1–45.
[63] Kooi, *Calvinists*, 30–4, 95, 119; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 150–4; Spaans, 'Violent Dreams', 149–66; Streng, *Stemme*, 327. For local variations and changing attitudes in the seventeenth century see Frijhoff, 'Catholic Apocalyptics', 253–71; Prak, 'The Politics', 159–75.
[64] Knuttel, *De toestand*, 1–45; Van Nierop, 'Sewing the Bailiff', 102–11; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 152–3.

who held 'correspondence with the enemy'. While the sincerity of some of these enforced declarations can be questioned, it is telling that Farnese's attempts to kindle Catholic insurgencies in northern towns generally failed. Some Catholics in Holland indicated they were willing to support the Republic, on the condition that the States kept their promise 'not to investigate anyone because of his faith'.[65] In the process, Catholics may also have found that life among heretics was not as bad as some church officials wanted them to believe. In May 1588, Hendrik van der Burch from Delft asked his sister Katrijna why she was still living in exile in Cologne. He criticised the mentality of many remaining exiles who claimed that life in the United Provinces was unbearable for Catholics. 'You people believe that it is better to serve God there than here,' Van der Burch argued, 'which I think is a mistake.' He asserted that 'here in these lands, there are many people of your kind who also strive for salvation though do not feel the need to leave the country.' Contrary to the view spread by some priests, Van der Burch stressed that in present-day Holland Catholics could 'lead a peaceful life'.[66]

Such statements go a long way towards explaining why Catholic migration from the northern Dutch Republic to the southern Habsburg Netherlands became a relatively marginal phenomenon after the 1590s. Few men and women deemed a permanent settlement in 'pure' Catholic territory to be preferable or even honourable. Like Hendrik van der Burch, they had come to believe that personal salvation could be achieved in a religiously mixed community. At the same time, notions of exile, migration and space continued to affect their religiosity. Throughout the seventeenth century, northern Catholics crossed the borders to participate in pilgrimages. If they could afford to do so, they tended to send their children to Catholic schools and universities abroad.[67] The domestic, half-hidden character of Catholic worship in the United Provinces reinforced these sensitivities about spatial divisions and limited religious expression. Some seventeenth-century Dutch Catholics liked to fashion themselves as 'inner exiles'. In this way they crafted a self-image that connected their personal experiences to the memory of their heroic forebears.[68]

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[65] UA, OKKN, Apostolische vicarissen, 64, Papers regarding the oath, 1585; NA, Cousebant, 1098, Various papers regarding the position of Catholics in the Republic.

[66] UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 615, Hendrik van der Burch to Katrijna van der Burch, 30 May 1588.

[67] Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief*, 116–29; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 144–71; Marinus, *De contra-reformatie*, 157; Spaans, *De levens*, 66–9; Wingens, *Over de grens*.

[68] Compare Coster, *Seven meditatien*, 38–41; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 183–4; Porteman, 'Na 350 jaar', 238–39.

### The exiles' agency

In the Habsburg Netherlands the returning refugees had been able to capitalise on their exile background. In the Dutch Republic, by contrast, those who returned after years of displacement had to keep a low profile. While the royal government in the south actively promoted the confessional agenda of émigrés, Dutch authorities regarded the remigration of Catholics in their territories with suspicion. It would be deceptive, however, to interpret the exiles' lower visibility in public as a sign of limited agency. After all, there is nothing to suggest that those who eventually moved to the northern provinces were less influenced by the years of displacement than their co-religionists in the south. To gauge the impact of former exiles in the north, we need to shift the focus of attention to informal networks, local communities and domestic spheres. In these environments, new Catholic subcultures developed in the aftermath of the revolt.

Catholics faced a number of interrelated challenges after their church order was suspended (in 1573 in Holland and Zeeland) and eventually abolished (in 1580–81). The rebel regime had expropriated parish churches and seized ecclesiastical incomes. The establishment of an alternative Catholic infrastructure took decades. Only in 1592 – twenty years after the start of the uprisings in Holland – did there emerge an improvised, shadowy organisation. Under the leadership of vicar-general Sasbout Vosmeer, this *Missio Hollandica* replaced the former Catholic dioceses in rebel-controlled areas.[69] The missionary framework did not diminish the urgency to formulate pragmatic solutions on the ground. Trained priests continued to be in short supply and had to operate in secret. War, occasional raids and forced migrations generated a leadership vacuum within the Catholic mission project. As several scholars have recently pointed out, lay initiatives effectively kept Catholicism afloat in the later sixteenth century.[70]

Returning refugees were key to the survival of Catholicism in these challenging years. Priest Nicolaas Wiggertsz Cousebant from Haarlem, for example, developed a working solution to the lack of qualified clerics. During his time in exile in Cologne, Cousebant had associated himself with the Marian sodality. This connection introduced him to Jesuit teaching methods and innovative forms of lay organisation. Apparently inspired by these examples, Cousebant and two other exiled clerics started an

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[69] Kooi, *Calvinists*, 47–63; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 30–2; Rogier, *Geschiedenis*, III, 487–501.

[70] See recent overviews in Kooi, *Calvinists*, 47–63, 99–108; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 24–68.

informal boarding house for boys in Cologne. This embryonic training camp for priests paved the way for the later establishment of the seminary of the Holland Mission in the city.[71] When Cousebant returned to Haarlem in the early 1580s, he tested an organisational model to mobilise the Catholic laity of Holland. More specifically, he persuaded a number of unmarried women of respectable pedigree to enter a semi-religious congregation in the town. Cousebant particularly recruited among families of fellow returning refugees. Claesge Jansdochter, for example, had escaped her native Hoorn in 1573, 'because the sins of heresy got the upper hand there'. When the situation improved in the later 1570s, she and her relatives decided to return. Yet Claesge reportedly 'found herself desolate' in Protestant Hoorn 'because she had no spiritual mentor'.[72] The new religious club of Cousebant could offer just that. As 'spiritual virgins' or 'lay sisters' the women received male clerical guidance while engaging in communal prayer, charity and education. These activities resembled those of traditional female convents. But unlike members of institutionalised orders, the spiritual virgins at Haarlem did not take any vows and were not bound to rules of enclosure. By living as lay women in common households, the group circumvented the official ban on new Catholic religious foundations. As Jo Spaans has shown, Cousebant's invention proved highly suitable for the conditions of an underground religious community. Commonly known as *kloppen*, the virgins at Haarlem were able to assist secretly travelling priests and provide elementary Catholic schooling. By the early seventeenth century the Haarlem 'congregation' counted about two hundred members. Their numbers rose spectacularly in the following decades. It has been estimated that around 1700 the Dutch Republic had 4,800 *kloppen*, who catered for an area where no more than 500 priests were active.[73]

Returning exiles also confronted the problem of church space. As a rule, Catholic services had turned secretive and domestic during the revolt of the 1570s and 1580s. In the early seventeenth century this practice led to the formation of more or less permanent house churches.[74] Although their origins are often uncertain, a number of sources indicate that former exiles with wealthy means were instrumental in their construction and

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[71] Cousebant's membership of the Marian sodality is evident from HAK, Jesuiten, A52, A52a, Lists of membership, 1576–1589 (under the name Vigerius). The nature of his Cologne 'seminary' is somewhat unclear. Compare Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 78–79; Spaans, *De levens*, 35–9; Spaans, 'Orphans and Students', 186–7.

[72] Oly, *Levens*, III, 95r-96v. See also the example of Lucretia Dirkxdr in Oly, *Levens*, I, 231v-232v.

[73] Monteiro, *Geestelijke maagden*, 51–5; Spaans, *De levens*, passim; Pipkin, *Rape*, 138–89.

[74] Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 172–97.

maintenance. In Gouda, the son of Jan Gerritsz Stempelse organised Catholic gatherings with Jesuit priests in his house.[75] In Amsterdam and Haarlem, the earliest examples of house churches are also linked to the families of (returned) exiles.[76] Their wills include substantial gifts to travelling priests, the Society of Jesus as well as the seminaries of the Holland Mission in Cologne and Leuven.[77] Charles H. Parker has demonstrated how the resources of these Catholic elites compensated for the loss of church incomes and underpinned the missionary enterprise.[78] This 'privatisation' of clerical funding also explains the considerable differences in the regional spread of priests in the Dutch Republic. Areas with affluent Catholic families were much better served than less-well-off locales. Lay patronage defined the priorities and the scope of pastoral care in the United Provinces.

Claiming some sort of agency in this semi-clandestine church was also a social strategy. A substantial proportion of former exiles and their relatives had previously occupied seats in town magistracies or the Habsburg administration. As ousted political elites they now sought to redefine their familial leadership roles. Excluded from the body politic of the United Provinces, these dynasties salvaged something of their lost prestige in the underground church.[79] A drive to maintain their social capital thus assisted the revitalisation of Catholicism in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It fuelled, for example, the establishment of house churches, the endowment of Catholic scholarships and erection of orphanages and houses for the poor. This dependence of lay elite patronage stimulated the emergence of localised Catholic subcultures in the United Provinces, which in turn could be a cause of friction and rivalry. Historians have noted fierce disputes within the Holland Mission over hierarchy, jurisdiction, revenues and strategy. Conflict between competing visions of the Jesuits and secular clergy proved particularly deep-rooted, and regularly paralysed the missionary enterprise.[80]

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[75] Dusseldorpius, *Uittreksel*, 436.
[76] Dudok van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse*, I, 112–17; Kannegieter, 'De Alteratie', 178–82, 196–201; Spaans, *De levens*, 56–7.
[77] Examples in NA, Heerman, 346 and 348 (Sybrant Jacobsz Bam), 350 (Maria Wesselsdr Buyck), 353 and 354 (Katharina Occo), 370 (Vroutgen Buyck and Pompeius Buyck), 461–465 (Jan Michiel Louffs); NA, Cousebant, 274 and 278 (Johan and Jacob van Alckemade) Tresoar, Van Eysinga, 2985 (Hans van Roorda).
[78] Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 154–9, 191–204.
[79] Examples in Dudok van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse*, I, 98–104, 115–7; Spaans, *De levens*, 39–58; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 160–1; Tracy, 'With and without', 563–4.
[80] Discussed in Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 39–43, 107–9, 171–4, 222–7; Rogier, *Geschiedenis*, III, 519–34. For increasing problems in the later seventeenth century see Ackermans, *Herders*, 211–56.

Tridentine Catholicism in the Dutch Republic was largely conceived in domestic spheres. The absence of state sponsorship and proper ecclesiastical infrastructures enabled returning exiles, their families and friends to initiate their own Counter-Reformation projects. These informal networks provided the backbone of Catholic culture in the United Provinces. Officials in Rome, Cologne and Brussels had strong reservations about this 'Tridentine model' in which the laity took centre stage. The involvement of *kloppen* and other lay women was deemed particularly worrying. Yet church officials also had to admit that this alternative road to Counter-Reformation spirituality was remarkably successful. 'The Catholic religion in Holland flourishes even more in secret than if it were in public', commented the papal nuncio Ottavio Frangipani with a mixture of irritation and surprise in 1591.[81]

### Contested exile legacies

Considering the agency of former exiles in the Catholic communities of the Dutch Republic, it comes as no surprise that the memory of displacement was kept alive in their spirituality. Hotzo Aexma, for example, composed his elaborate *Conscriptio Exulum* 'to the eternal memory and to laud, praise and honour the pious and persevering exiles and escaped Frisians.'[82] A number of different manuscript copies of such texts circulated among Catholic communities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We know relatively little about their provenance and use. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the diary of Wouter Jacobsz and the book of martyrs by Christiaen van Adrichem were used extensively for prayer and contemplation by later generations.[83] This handwritten material complemented printed texts from Antwerp and Cologne publishers, which offered Catholic readings of the revolt.[84] Charles H. Parker has argued that these different narratives of persecution had a formative impact on Dutch Catholic identity. The perception of themselves as a repressed minority fostered a sense of group bonding and enabled Catholics to identify with the stories of suffering in biblical and early Christian history.[85]

The memory of exile was particularly powerful when it could be linked to family histories or be used to address contemporary issues. Maria

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[81] Quoted in Kooi, *Calvinists*, 47.    [82] Tresoar, Eysinga, 3370, Conscriptio Exulum.
[83] UA, OKKN, Verzamelde stukken, 456, Martyrology by Christiaen van Adrichem. Compare Spaans, 'Catholicism and Resistance', 159–63; Dusseldorpius, *Uittreksel*, l–lii, 225, 479.
[84] Vermaseren, *De katholieke.*    [85] Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 46–58.

Buyck, for example, revered her exiled grandfather Joost Buyck and treasured some of his personal possessions. In 1604, she still owned 'seven pillows with the coats of arms of my late grandfather Joost Buyck'. Maria's strong identification with the family's exile past also guided her distribution of bequests. In her will, she left most of her wealth to Catholic institutions at Kalkar – the asylum of several members of the Buyck and Bam dynasties.[86] In much the same vein did other families cultivate relationships with their former host towns.[87] S.A.C. Dudok van Heel has recently pointed to an intriguing series of portraits of expelled Catholic magistrates from Amsterdam. It is likely that these were commissioned by their descendants, apparently in an attempt to memorialise the family's exile past and their disgraceful removal from civic power.[88] At the same time, such commissions underscored the undiminished social ambitions of Catholic elites in the Republic.

Exile credentials also served as clear markers of esteem in the higher echelons of the *Missio Hollandica* and the office of the nuncio in Cologne. Papal representative Ottavio Frangipani never failed to mention refugee backgrounds in his letters of recommendation.[89] When Herbert Haeston required clerical dispensation to marry in 1593, Cornelis Drenckwaert subtly pointed out to Sasbout Vosmeer that Herbert had lodged Catholic priests and had a brother in exile.[90] Families who sought social elevation invoked similar arguments that proved their Catholic respectability. Diederick van Pallaes, for example, successfully applied for a noble title at the court of the German emperor in 1642. His certificate duly noted that Diederick's grandfather 'had suffered a great deal for the sake of religion and was many years in exile in Emmerich'.[91] An exile past could be a useful and flexible social instrument in the post-Tridentine Church. Throughout the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the theme of exile served as an argumentative strategy that was employed to fulfil various contemporary needs.

Still, these examples do not do full justice to the complexities of the exile legacy in the United Provinces. In contrast to the situation in the south, the memory of Catholic exile was a sensitive issue in Protestant areas and could not be exploited politically. Its history was never made visual through monuments or institutionalised in public festivals. What is

[86] NA, Heereman, 350, Will of Maria Wesselsdr Buyck, 1604.
[87] Examples in NA, Heerman, 346, Will of Sijbrant Jacobsz Bam, 1639; De Werd, *St. Nicolaikirche*, 26–27.
[88] Dudok van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse*, I, 91–94.
[89] Several examples of him and others in Brom and Hensen, *Romeische bronnen*, 242, 280–1, 288–9, 293, 358, 369, 419–20, 677–8, 706.
[90] Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 158–9.    [91] Dudok van Heel, *Van Amsterdamse*, I, 102.

more, the social memory of exile was very much contested territory in the Dutch Republic. Various groups of Protestants, particularly the privileged Calvinist community, perceived exile as one of the founding experiences of *their* faith. In his *Embarrassment of Riches*, Simon Schama already noted the remarkable fascination of Dutch Calvinists with the biblical Exodus-theme.[92] There were some differences between Calvinist and Catholic devotional preferences in this regard. Catholics could incorporate the exile cult into their common prayer for the dead. Reformed theologians, by contrast, denied the existence of purgatory and therefore opposed the idea that believers could influence the salvation of the souls of the dead through their devotion. Here, memorising exile rather served a didactic, exemplary purpose. Opposing views as to how one should commemorate exile did not diminish the potentially explosive effects of parallel exile cults within a single society. Hence, not all Dutch Catholics were keen to associate themselves with the delicate history of flight, let alone the Habsburg allegiance of some of their forebears. These were painful memories for those who had cast their lot with the United Provinces.[93] Some Catholics preferred to historicise the revolt or rewrite their family's part in it. In this way, they could join in a national culture that framed and commemorated the war as a common Dutch suffering under foreign Spanish tyranny.

   Some further evidence for this mixed Catholic attitude towards the revolt can be gauged from the variable enthusiasm for its martyrs. Scholars have remarked that the politicised veneration of the Gorinchem martyrs and other priests who had been murdered was particularly promoted in, and propagated from, the Southern Netherlands.[94] In the confessionalised Habsburg state, this cult of martyrs neatly chimed with the newly invented patriotic narratives. In the United Provinces, the public image of priests who had been killed by rebel militias was ambivalent, at best. The published edition of the book of martyrs by Pieter Opmeer (1625) typically emphasised the exemplary piety of the victims, rather than the cruelty of the persecutors.[95] It is also telling that outside the circle of steadfast exiles there was little support for the campaign of Sasbout Vosmeer to have Balthazar Gérard beatified. Catholic lay

[92] Schama, *The Embarrassment*, 96–116. See also Exalto, *Gereformeerde heiligen*, 233–5.
[93] See for example the letters by Gerard de Wael van Vronesteyn in NA, Heereman, 780, 783, 785. A fine analysis of exile memory culture is offered by Müller, 'Permeable Memories'. Also Spaans, *De levens*, 104–12; Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief*, 153–80.
[94] Frijhoff, 'Shifting Identities', 7; Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief*, 111–36; Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, 201–22.
[95] Van Nierop, *Treason*, 247–9.

spirituality in the Dutch Republic tended to focus on 'safe' saints of local medieval pedigree or those with unproblematic national resonance, such as St Willibrord and St Boniface.[96] In the atmosphere of growing national consciousness, memories of exile, martyrdom and revolt were adapted to suit contemporary needs.

[96] Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, 55–6, 184–6; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 159–61; Spaans, *De levens*, 25–9.

# Epilogue

In her *Liberty's Exiles*, Maya Jasanoff recounts the tales of loyalist refugees during the American War of Independence, who had thrown in their lot with the British. Jasanoff dubs these eighteenth-century American exiles 'losers and founders', thus pointing to their contradictory experiences.[1] This characterisation could easily be applied to the Catholic loyalists of the Dutch revolt two centuries earlier, whose fate and agency shaped the history of the Low Countries in unexpected ways. Expelled and marginalised, they became the driving forces of an energetic Counter-Reformation that redefined the two Netherlands – north and south. The remarkable agency of the Catholic exile community was not unique, though. The 'losers and founders' of the sixteenth-century Low Countries fit within a pattern of forced migrations across Reformation Europe. Historical textbooks routinely inform us that the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries witnessed a sharp increase in the number of displaced persons. Shifting economic structures and the rise of bureaucratic states contributed to these migrations, but divisions within the western Christian Church were most crucial to their growth. Religious reformations triggered heightened concerns about uniformity, social cohesion and sacred space in all corners of Europe. The migration of dissident minorities, either voluntary or imposed, became a common means to uphold the ideal of an unbroken *corpus christianum*. It is significant that all religious denominations eventually became victims of analogous quests for purity. By 1600, Jewish, Muslim, Protestant and Catholic minorities all shared an experience of flight, expulsion and exile.

Modern scholarship has not always appreciated these cross-confessional parallels and the seemingly paradoxical impact of religious exile on early modern societies. Reformation historians have generally preferred to

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[1] Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, 343–50.

study refugees from a particular confessional or national angle. Economic historians have mostly focused on quantitative analyses of migrating communities, ignoring their wider cultural significance. In both strands of scholarship, religious refugees are often portrayed as mere victims of repressive, confessional regimes. There is no doubt that conditions of displacement in sixteenth-century Europe were challenging and that immigrants had low social status in host societies. Yet exile, as this book has tried to show, could also be a creative force. Flight and dislocation generated new, transnational bonds and established imagined communities of faith across Europe. The experience of exile prompted men and women to reconsider their world views and rethink the question of what it actually meant to be 'Protestant', 'Catholic' or 'Jewish'. In this way, religious refugees played a key role in the construction of confessional identities in Reformation Europe. In early modern Jewry, for instance, diasporas fuelled a heightened sense of Sephardic and Ashkenazic identity, thus triggering collective attempts toward (re)Judaisation in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The forced migration of (crypto)Jews also fostered the emergence of supranational trade networks in Europe and the Atlantic world. Studies of Reformed Protestantism have likewise shown how exile shaped International Calvinism and how refugees successfully spread their creed and model of church organisation. As victims of a common quest for confessional purity, these exiles also sought to establish their own purified communities of faith.

### The Catholic exile experience

This ambivalent image of the early modern exile experience goes a long way in explaining what happened to Catholic refugees in the Dutch revolt. However disruptive and confusing, exile inspired displaced Catholics to reorganise themselves, to transform their religious identity and to mobilise others for their ideas. This book has argued that developments within Calvinist and Catholic émigré networks were largely similar, however different their respective belief systems. In both refugee communities, exile served as a catalyst for religious radicalisation, thus galvanising men and women into action and forging a collective confessionalised mentality. Hence, what Geneva, Emden and London did for Reformed Protestantism, Cologne, Douai and Paris did for Tridentine Catholicism. In the contested Low Countries, these two opposing forces were particularly visible. During the Dutch revolt, migrants on both sides fuelled a politicisation of religion, which paved the way for the lasting

cultural divide between the northern and the southern Netherlands. To understand this dialectical relationship and the lasting impact of forced migrations in this area of Europe, we need to study religious exile communities collectively and comparatively.

What, exactly, were the essential ingredients for the confessionalisation of the Netherlandish refugees? A sense of social exclusion and resentment were not enough to kick-start a spirit of militancy and exile solidarity. It took support facilities in asylum centres, including charismatic clerical leadership, engaging media and innovative forms of sociability, to turn the refugees' sense of victimhood into a more self-conscious, combative attitude. For the Catholic émigrés of the Dutch revolt, places such as Cologne, Douai and St Omer served as socio-religious laboratories, where creative coalitions between clerics and laity were tested, an agenda for the Netherlandish Counter-Reformation was conceived and various media strategies were explored. In this way, the forced migration of Catholics during the 1570s and 1580s generated paradoxical effects. While the expulsion of Habsburg loyalists had strengthened a sense of unity in the rebel camp, it simultaneously encouraged the expelled men and women to reinvent themselves. By othering and alienating the Catholic loyalists, the Dutch rebels in fact facilitated the growth of confessional militancy in foreign safe havens. The dramatic consequences of this unforeseen development became fully apparent when members of the reborn exile communities were able to return home after 1585. In the recovered Southern Netherlands they became the mobilising forces of a renewed Catholic order.

### Lasting impact

In demonstrating how exile triggered collective Catholic action, two additional conclusions may be drawn. First, this book has sought to clarify the belated yet rapid emergence of Counter-Reformation spirituality in the Habsburg Netherlands, a development that has often puzzled historians. This Catholic resurgence after 1585 was not merely the outcome of top-down, Tridentine reforms and Habsburg state sponsorship, nor was it exclusively the result of spontaneous initiatives 'from below'. By showing how returning exiles from Douai, St Omer and Cologne advanced their agenda in the recaptured southern provinces, this study suggests a dynamic interaction between the two. Without a dedicated lobby group of returning refugees, who generally belonged to the urban classes, Catholic renewal in places such as Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent may not have been successful. Yet conversely, this Counter-Reformation 'from the middle', would have been unable to succeed

without government support.[2] The explosive potential of this coalition becomes particularly evident when comparing the parallel reintegration of Catholic exiles in the northern Dutch Republic. Here, their agency was conditioned by the marginalised status of Catholicism, leading to an alternative form of leadership via familial networks and domesticised underground churches. But in the north, too, the activism of former refugee families proved vital for the renewal of Catholic religiosity in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

This is not to suggest that all Catholic refugees went through a similar spiritual process or that an appetite for confessional militancy was the inevitable outcome of an exile experience. We have seen that refugees responded differently to the challenges of displacement, and how socio-economic backgrounds, gender and institutions in asylum towns shaped their individual responses. It would be equally misleading to present the refashioning of Catholic identities in exile as a radical break with pre-Reformation forms of religiosity. John Bossy's thesis about the emergence of Tridentine Catholicism in England, which supposedly replaced an already dead Catholic culture, is too reductive in this regard.[3] The refugees' Counter-Reformation culture was not created out of nothing. On the contrary, exiles were highly creative in moulding old rites to fit new challenges and in adapting Tridentine guidelines to their lived experience. This book contends, however, that the rise of a popular Counter-Reformation movement in the Low Countries was, above all, the consequence of violent conflict and forced migration. It was the experience of displacement, rather than the ecclesiastical reforms of Philip II, that turned traditional Catholics into committed and militant defenders of their Church. Considering this unforeseen development, it could be argued that the Catholic exile crisis in the Dutch revolt was a blessing in disguise for the Catholic cause in northern Europe at large.

Second, then, a reconstruction of the exile experience reveals that the shaping of Catholic militancy in the Low Countries was not an isolated or typically Netherlandish development, but a process that was internationally informed. For it was not in Antwerp, Amsterdam or Brussels that a common Catholic party first became conspicuous, but in the refugee centres near or across the borders of Habsburg territory. Here, the exiles mixed with fellow émigrés from the British Isles and had access to a wealth

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[2] Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, 6–7, 198–202. Compare Johnson, *Magistrates*, 9; Pollmann, 'How to Flatter', 97–106.

[3] Bossy, *The English Catholic Community*. Recent assessments of this thesis in Duffy, *Fires of Faith*, 188–207; Marshall, *Reformation England*, 195–7; Walsham, *The Reformation*, 153–232.

of cutting-edge Tridentine media and Jesuit-led facilities. The growing sense of International Catholicism led to lasting solidarities. From the later 1580s the Southern Netherlands served as the common hub of English, Scottish, Irish, Dutch and French Catholic refugees and their transnational lobbying groups. Geoffrey Parker has argued that in these years the war between Habsburg Spain and the Dutch rebels also fed a more general polarisation of international politics.[4] Forced migrations during the Dutch revolt brought forth this radicalisation of minds. We know that International Calvinism strengthened Protestant alliances in northern and central Europe up until the Thirty Years' War. The Catholic exile experience did something similar for the Church militant in northern Europe. The internationalisation of the Catholic world view in the later sixteenth century built on ideas, contacts and networks first established in asylum towns during the 1570s and 1580s. While the character of Catholic migration in early modern Europe deserves much closer scrutiny, this study has argued in favour of a more comparative, cross-confessional approach to the topic. In any case, the Catholic exile experience in the Dutch revolt was not as 'Dutch', or as uniquely Catholic, as the exiles themselves would have wanted us to believe.

[4] Parker, *Spain and the Netherlands*, 66–81.

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